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Tinian Hot Pepper Festival: Spiciest in 20 years. PAGE 2

$50K bail imposed on man accused of strangling woman. PAGE 3

$1

Man in illegal Guam transport faces possible bail revocation

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

One of the four men indicted for their alleged involvement in an illegal scheme to bring Chinese nationals from Saipan to Guam now faces possible bail revocation after he tested positive for drug use.

Ramon Jose Quitano Sablan recently tested positive for methamphetamine use and now faces the possibility that his bail will be revoked.

The U.S. District Court for the NMI granted last Wednesday U.S Probation officer Juanette David-Atalig's request for Sablan to appear for a hearing to determine if his bail should be revoked or modified.

According to the declaration in support of a petition for bail revocation, David-Atalig said Sablan initially said that he hadn't used

See MAN on Page 4

HANMI occupancy at 38% in January 2024

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported 38% average occupancy rate among its 11 member-hotels for January 2024, a 68% increase compared to 24% average occupancy among 11 hotels in January 2023.

A total of 27,361 of 71,805 available room nights sold during January 2024, an 89% increase compared to 14,475 of 61,286 available rooms sold in January 2023. Average room rates were

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GOVERNORS ROW

OFFICE OF THE CNMI GOVERNOR

Along with other governors, Gov, Arnold I. Palacios is in Washington, D.C. this week for the 2024 senior plenary of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas organized by the U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Insular Affairs. Speaking to an audience composed of representatives from various federal agencies, Palacios talked about ongoing and new projects and activities in the CNMI that need urgent federal responses. In the photo, seated from left, are Delegate Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS), American Samoa Gov. Lemanu Peleti Mauga, Palacios, deputy assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa, assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor, director for Puerto Rico and the Territories in the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Gretchen Sierra-Zorita, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, and Delegate James Moylan (R-GU).

'Time to ask NMI voters whether to have another ConCon'

DeLeon Guerrero

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

It's been almost 30 years since the last constitutional convention to amend the NMI Constitution and Senate President

See TIME on Page 4

King-Hinds

King-Hinds to run for delegate

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds has decided to run as the CNMI's delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives in the Nov. 5, 2024, general election.

King-Hinds, who is a lawyer, confirmed with *Saipan Tribune*

See DELEGATE on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS

Sang Kyun Kim visited Saipan about 10 years ago and loved its pristine waters and island-style living so much he came back and opened Gangnam Chicken in Chalan Kanoa last December.

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SUPPLEMENT

Home of the proverbial Mighty Dolphins, Marianas High School at 55 continues a legacy of providing its students a holistic approach to education–cultivating the minds, character, and dedicated community spirit of those who walk its hallowed halls.

PAGE 13

NATION

The White House is considering using provisions of federal immigration law repeatedly tapped by former President Donald Trump to unilaterally enact a sweeping crackdown at the southern border.

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Local

MVA

RB5 & Grands wins first place in the booth decorating contest at the 20th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16 and 17, 2024, in the Marianas.

Tinian Hot Pepper Festival: Spiciest in 20 years

The 20th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16-17, 2024, in the Marianas served up the spiciest assortment of activities since the inception of the festival by the Marianas Visitors Authority two decades ago.

The festival pays homage to Tinian's diminutive yet potent "donni sali" hot pepper and was held at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose, Tinian, adjacent to the picturesque Jones Beach. The festival opening ceremony on Friday, attended by Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang and other dignitaries, featured a historic sister city agreement signing by the mayors of Tinian and the town of Tubla in the province of Banguet in the Philippines before the kickoff of festivities.

"Any weekend is a great weekend in Tinian, but the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival highlights part of the local culture that is unique—the 'donni sali' hot pepper, and our goal is going to find better and new ways to celebrate that each year," said MVA deputy managing director Judy C. Torres, who welcomed festival celebrants at the opening ceremony. "The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival continues to grow more popular every year as the MVA attracts more visitors and more media exposure to the island with this celebration. They come for the festival, the food, the beach and ocean, the burn, and especially, the hospitable people of Tinian. The MVA couldn't do it without them."

The festival is organized in collaboration with the Tinian Mayor's Office, and mayors of Saipan, Rota, Northern Islands, and Guam attended the event, along with the Tinian Legislative Delegation. Cash prizes were awarded for all the competitions over the weekend, including the newly added 5K Pika Fun Run, which attracted 58 runners early Saturday. Top finishers in the male division were Keith Longuski, followed by Jeff Pierrot and Jack Russillo. Topping the women's division were Virginie Ternisien, Kimberlyn King-Hinds, and Mary Sims. All participants also received a 2024 Pika Fun Run T-shirt.

Little Miss Pika 2024 Isadella San Nicolas and Little Mr. Pika 2024 Rickson Quenzy Manglona, the first ever, were crowned for best combined score on hot pepper-inspired costume, Q&A, and overall stage presence. Other top precocious pepper picks for Little Miss were Sesa Lux San Nicolas and Anita Moses, and for Mr. was Kyjhun Alambra and Francisco Moses.

For the first time, men and women went head-to-head in two heats of the Triple J Hot Pepper Eating Contest. On Friday (Feb. 16), Michael Phillip Womack of Pohnpei chomped down on 100 "donni sali" the fastest, followed by Vincent Arriola, and Levi Rouse. On Saturday (Feb. 17), Vladislav Melnik repeated his winning form of a few years back to take top honors, followed by Syliva Biz in second place and Womack in third place.

In the JC Burger Eating Contest, Ilan Bubb downed his pepper-laced burger first, followed by Thomas Erickson and Levi Rouse.

Tinian home cooks swept the titles for best "katdun pika" (spicy beef stew), with Bill Cing in first place, Bernard Lopez in second place, and Sylvia Biz in third. When asked when the donni should

See PEPPER on Page 3

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MVA

Vladislav Melnik, left, and Sylvia Biz chomp their way through 100 "donni sali" hot peppers to win first and second place, respectively, in the Triple J Hot Pepper Eating Contest on Feb. 17, 2024, at the 20th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Marianas.

PEPPER

From page 2

be added, the cooks jokingly agreed that it could be first, it could be last, or it could be repeatedly done throughout the cooking process.

Popular local musician Yobei Parker set the stage for the Cha-cha Dance Contest on Saturday, where contestants were judged based on their hot pepper-inspired costumes and their smooth dance moves. Tearing up the dance floor for first place were Francisco Moses and Niziah Dela Cruz, with two other couples also receiving prizes.

The co-ed beach volleyball title, which kicked off on Thursday (Feb. 15) went to Donni Diggers in first place, Dorothy San Nicolas in second place, and Tropics Bar in third. The best decorated booth was RB5 & Grands.

Docomo Pacific was the Exclusive Pika Sponsor of the 20th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, which was organized by the MVA in collaboration with the Tinian Mayor's Office. Additional sponsors were JC Café and Triple J.

Ferry service was provided by the MVA between Saipan and Tinian for the event, and a shuttle service was provided between the airport and seaport and the festival grounds. Free camping was available at Jones Beach, Taga Beach, and at Tachogna Beach nearby.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival is held every President's Day weekend on Tinian, the Marianas. ***(PR)***

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$50K bail imposed on man accused of strangling woman

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $50,000 cash bail on a man accused of strangling his former girlfriend because he was allegedly jealous of her new partner.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed Wednesday a $50,000 cash bail on Kelvin Cabrera Sanchez, 35, who is charged with assault and battery, strangulation, interfering with a domestic violence report, disturbing the peace, and domestic violence.

Sanchez was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody and was ordered to return to court on March 4 for a preliminary hearing.

Assistant public defender Emily Thomsen was appointed to represent Sanchez. Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds is prosecuting the case.

According to the complaint filed against Sanchez, the Department of Public Safety received a call on Feb. 19, at around 4:34pm, from an off-duty officer about an incident at the AJ Poker in San Antonio. At the scene, the victim alleged that Sanchez became physical with her.

In a follow-up interview with the victim, she told investigators that Sanchez, who is her former boyfriend, had called to tell her he wants to beat up her new boyfriend and that he was outside the new boyfriend's home.

The victim said she ended the call with Sanchez, but he allegedly continued to call, which eventually annoyed her so she sent him a message telling him that she was at the AJ Poker in San Antonio.

Later, while waiting for a friend to pick her up from the poker arcade, Sanchez allegedly showed up and smacked her forehead, causing her hat to fall off.

The victim said this led her to threaten to call the police and, as she was trying to call 911, Sanchez allegedly grabbed her phone and threw it against a nearby wall. Sanchez then allegedly pushed her, pinned her against a nearby wall, and wrapped his right hand around her neck.

The victim noted to police that she tried to call for help but she allegedly could not breathe. Soon after, Sanchez let go of her neck, shoved her, and walked away.

The victim also told police that Sanchez strangled her in February 2023, until she became unconscious.

Babauta nominated to serve on CEC board

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

In his capacity as acting governor, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang has nominated Susan R. Babauta, a retired educator, to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission board representing Saipan and Northern Islands.

If confirmed by the Senate, Babauta will serve a four-year term, which will expire on July 21, 2027.

Apatang informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) on Tuesday that she and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios are confident that the nominee is qualified and will be an asset on the CEC board.

Apatang

Last month, CEC executive director Kayla S. Igitol asked Palacios to fill the board vacancies after informing him that, instead of a full complement of nine, CEC currently has only five commissioners—just enough to have a quorum to conduct any business.

Currently, there are three vacant commissioner positions for Saipan. The current Saipan commissioners are CEC chair Jesus I. Sablan and Remedio Sablan.

There is one vacant commissioner position for Tinian. The current commissioner for Tinian is John Diego Attao.

Rota has no vacant position. Rota's current commissioners are Esther A. Yatar and Lelanie I. Manglona.

Igitil said that filling the vacancies on the CEC board will allow the commission to ensure that CNMI elections are held with impartiality and fairness.

This year's election will be held on Nov. 5, 2024.

MAN

From page 1

methamphetamine since his last admission on Feb. 16, but then tested positive for use of meth on Feb. 19.

"Prior to conducting an unobserved drug test, the defendant was asked when he last used methamphetamine. He replied, 'The last time I admitted, so I should be good now.' However, he tested positive for the use of methamphetamine and executed an admission of drug use form indicating he used 'meth' on Feb. 19," said David-Atalig.

On Jan. 23, the grand jury indicted Sablan and three other defendants for conspiracy to transport illegal aliens.

Sablan's co-defendants are Maverick Ryan Iguel Marlik, Yan Juan Hu Taitano, and Lee Jesse Omar Reyes.

On Jan. 31, Sablan made his initial appearance before

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
The U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona. With no objection from the parties, the court released the defendant on a $1,000 unsecured bond with conditions to include pretrial supervision, random drug testing, and substance use treatment.

On Feb. 5, an informational report was submitted to the court after the defendant admitted using methamphetamine on Feb. 4, 2024.

On Feb. 15, a second informational report was submitted to the court after the defendant admitted using methamphetamine on Feb. 9.

On Feb. 16, the defendant was instructed to submit to a random drug test. However, no test was administered as he admitted to using meth" on Feb. 13.

During a noncompliance meeting, the defendant indicated that the Community Guidance Center had scheduled his intake and assessment for Feb. 20.

On Feb. 20, David-Atalig met with the defendant to discuss employment prospects and to follow up on his appointment at the CGC. The defendant stated he arrived 30 minutes late, therefore, it was rescheduled to Friday.

During this meeting, Sablan admitted to using meth on Feb. 19.

HANMI

From page 1

$136.33 compared to $165.63 last January.

"Compared to a year ago, HANMI members have reopened more rooms and we've sold almost double the number of rooms," said HANMI chair Dennis Seo. "However, the overall average occupancy rate of 38% is still critically low and unsustainable for hotels...our profit market starts at about 80% occupancy."

Seo added the falling room rate average is due to high dependence on only one source market—Korea—and the absence of large secondary source markets of visitors.

"Compared to January 2023, there is a big drop this year in Average Daily Rate — $29, and even in December there was a drop of $8 compared to a year ago," he said. "Recent market productivity has not been great, and this is a sign that competition among hotels has been intense. It is essential to strengthen arrivals from Japan and bring back a third major source market. This is the best way to grow the economy, increase revenue for businesses and government, and restore regular work hours for employees."

Seo added that HANMI is submitting official comment to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in support of an EVS-TAP program for visitors from China. In addition, HANMI is supporting the reinstatement of Annex VI by the U.S Department of Transportation, which would allow Chinese carriers to provide flight service to Saipan without restriction on passenger flight numbers.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, Saipan World Resort, Surfrider Resort Hotel, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

HANMI was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of the Marianas. HANMI also makes regular charitable donations to support non-profit organizations and tourism-related government projects. HANMI membership is open to all qualified hotels and other loading properties for tourists and affiliated business. Membership applications are available at www.saipanhotels.org. ***(PR)***

TIME

From page 1

Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) believes now is the time to ask CNMI voters whether another constitutional convention should be held.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments, DeLeon Guerrero said yesterday that Senate Legislative Initiative 23-03, which she just introduced, is not proposing any amendments to the CNMI Constitution.

"It is only asking and giving the CNMI people the power to decide almost 30 years from the last constitutional convention if today is the time to convene another constitutional convention," she pointed out.

DeLeon Guerrero stated in the legislative initiative that its purpose is to present the question of whether to convene another constitutional convention to the voters of the CNMI during the next general election. The question could potentially be asked voters on the Nov. 5, 2024, election.

She said the initiative does not advocate nor recommend any position, but only poses that question to voters. Pursuant to the NMI Constitution, the question requires the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total votes cast.

The last time the question to hold another constitutional convention was presented to voters was in 2005. In that election, 7,394 votes favored convening the constitutional convention, while 5,156 voted against it, failing to garner the requisite two-thirds affirmative vote.

Since the CNMI Constitution became effective in 1978, it has been amended over 50 times. After the adoption of the CNMI Constitution by the First Constitutional Convention in 1978, two subsequent constitutional conventions convened.

In November 1985, voters ratified all 44 amendments proposed by the Second Constitutional Convention that was held in the same year.

In November 1995, all 19 amendments proposed by the Third Constitutional Convention held that same year failed to garner the requisite votes for ratification.

DELEGATE

From page 1

yesterday that she will be submitting her letter of intent to the CNMI Republican Party for its consideration as the party's delegate candidate.

King-Hinds will make the formal announcement of her candidacy at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe this Thursday, Feb. 29, at 9:30am.

CNMI Republican Party president Diego Benavente announced yesterday that the deadline for anyone to submit their letter of intent to run as the Republican candidate for the office of the CNMI delegate is March 15, 2024. The letter must be submitted no later than 5pm and addressed to Benavente.

King-Hinds' term on the CPA board, which started in 2015, ended in October 2023. As CPA board chair, she served, among other things, as the lead negotiator for the divert airfield lease agreement between the U.S. Department of Defense and the CNMI.

She served as chairperson of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents from 2002 to 2006.

From 2014 to 2015, King-Hinds was the in-house counsel for the NMI Settlement Fund.

Last Feb. 6, Rep. Edwin K. Propst announced his intent to run as the CNMI's delegate under the NMI Democratic Party banner.

Incumbent Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) will not be seeking a ninth term.

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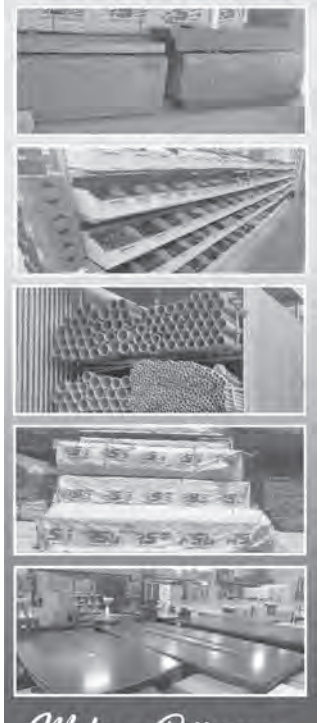
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Marianas March Against Cancer is back!

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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After a five-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Marianas March Against Cancer is returning this May 3, 2023, once again to make a resounding statement of community support in the fight against cancer.

Commonwealth Cancer Association board president Roman Bo Palacios, interim executive director Lynn Tenorio, and MMAC 2024 chair Jenypy Sambile announced last Tuesday the return of this popular event in an official launch at their headquarters in the Marina Heights building in Puerto Rico

The team said they are excited to revive this longtime community event, especially as they draw close to 20 years of hosting the march on Saipan.

This year, MMAC will be held at the CPA Airport Field and, instead of the typical 12-hour event, the MMAC will last just eight hours, "just to have this as a comeback in reviving MMAC again, just to get everybody back to feeling what it's like to be part of the event."

"So we're keeping it at eight hours until next year where we're highlighting 20 years of Marianas March Against Cancer," said Sambile.

The event will begin at 3pm on May 3, but the march will officially start with an opening ceremony at 6pm and the march will continue until 11pm.

Aside from changes made to the march's duration, Sambile said most traditional happenings will remain the same, including celebrating cancer survivors and remembering those who've been lost to cancer.

Tenorio said the money raised during MMAC will be used to provide for cancer patients' needs, whether it be prescriptions, nutritional supplements, or hospital beds, wheelchairs etc. "We also use the money for community education and promotion of [cancer] prevention," she said.

There are six tiers of entry for participating teams: Pulan for families and Napu for schools, will cost $300 for both; Atdao for non-profits, $399; Tano for non-profit organizations partnering with a school, educational institution or government agency, $500; Puti'on for corporations, $550; and Tasi for corporations partnering with a family, non-profit organization or school, $750.

For new registrants, there is a $100 discount for early bird registration. Registration is ongoing and interested community members and groups can email recruitment. mmac@gmail.com/.

Early bird pricing will end March 15, and the final registration deadline is March 27.

There will be four tiers of sponsorship packages: The first is at $10,000, and that sponsorship is usually represented on the MMAC shirt. The second one is $8,000-plus, the third $3,000-plus, and fourth is $1,000-plus. They will also recognize $500 and up sponsorships. This includes in-kind and monetary donations.

Sambile said the MMAC is not just about walking or raising funds. "They are about solidarity, hope, and resilience. They serve as powerful reminders that when we come together as a community, we can reach remarkable things. By participating in and supporting each other, we send a message of unity and determination to those fighting cancer, letting them know that they are not alone in the battle."

Palacios said they are excited to hold the event once again, especially after a long break.

"This event has gotten many in the community really excited. Because it really is the community coming together. It's not just the MMAC Committee. …We have other nonprofits who are participating. …We have government agencies. We have schools. We have corporate partners. …And so it really is a community-driven event," Palacios said.

The opportunity to relaunch the MMAC is important not just for the Commonwealth Cancer Association, but also for the community, Palacios said.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE (1) ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:
Compute, classify, and record numerical data to keep financial records complete. Perform any combination of routine calculating, posting, and verifying duties to obtain primary financial data for use in maintaining accounting records. May also check the accuracy of figures, calculations, and postings pertaining to business transactions recorded by other workers. Operate computers programmed with accounting software to record, store, and analyze information. Check figures, postings, and documents for correct entry, mathematical accuracy, and proper codes. Comply with federal, state, and company policies, procedures, and regulations. Operate 10-key calculators, typewriters, and copy machines to perform calculations and produce documents. Receive, record, and bank cash, checks, and vouchers. Code documents according to company procedures. Perform financial calculations, such as amounts due, interest charges, balances, discounts, equity, and principal. Reconcile or note and report discrepancies found in records. Perform general office duties, such as filing, answering telephones, and handling routine correspondence. Access computerized financial information to answer general questions as well as those related to specific accounts.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:
- Associates Degree in Accounting, foreign equivalence is acceptable;
- At least 36 months experience in bookkeeping, accounting or auditing clerk; &
- Must be knowledgeable/experienced with operating PC, adding machine, electric typewriter, accounting software such as SAGE MAS 90 or SAGE BusinessWorks 2019 and Microsoft Office Suite.

Working Conditions: Full-time (40 hours per week).
Location: Pacific Amusement, Inc. Bldg., No. 6943, Chalan Pali Arnold, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

James Brian Gebhard, General Manager
Pacific Amusement, Inc.
P.O. Box 504419
Building No. 6943, Chalan Pali Arnold
Saipan, MP 96950
Contact no. 670-233-4397
E-mail: jim@pacificamusement.com

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Kang Corporation **POSITION:** Accountant **NO. OF VACANCIES:** 1

JOB DESCRIPTION: General Duties: Analyzes financial information and prepare financial reports to determine or maintain records of assets, liabilities, profits and loss, tax liability or other financial activities within the organization; and Performs professional operating or cost accounting work requiring knowledge of the theory and practice of recording, classifying, examining, and analyzing the data and records of financial transactions. Specific Duties: Analyzes the effects of transactions upon account relationships; Evaluates alternative means of treating transactions; Plans the way account structures should be developed or modified; Assures the adequacy of the accounting system as the basis for reporting to management; Considers the need for new or changed controls; Projects accounting data to show the effects of proposed plans on capital investments, income, cash position, and overall financial condition; Interprets the meaning of accounting records, reports, and statements; Advises management on accounting matters; and Recommends improvements, adaptations, or revisions in the accounting system and procedures.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
EDUCATION: Must have a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting.
EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 24 months of relevant work experience as an Accountant.
JOB SITE: Amare Pl Pale Arnold Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HOW TO APPLY: Submit or mail comprehensive professional resume and supporting credentials to:

KANG HEE LIM
President
KANG CORPORATION
Office Address: Amare Pl Pale Arnold Road, Chalan Laulau Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 503053, Saipan, MP 96950 • Email Address: kangparts@hotmail.com
Telephone Number: Tel. 1(670) 235-9369

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 • Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315 • www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of February 23, 2024

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

NO.	APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1.	Department of Public Works (DPW)	01/23/2024 SMS-2024-024	Route 310 & Route 38 Road Improvements Project	Tapochao, Chalan Galaidi & Navy Hill, Saipan	Major Siting	Certified Complete* 02/14/2024
2.	Department of Public Works (DPW)	01/23/2024 SMS-2024-025	Route 317 Road Improvement Project	Gualo Rai, Saipan	Major Siting	Certified Complete* 02/14/2024
3.	Canaan Realty, LLC	01/26/2024 Supplemental SMS-2023-102	Construction of 42 Units Housing Project	As Lito, Saipan	Major Siting	Certified Complete with Conditions* 02/13/2024
4.	Jijing A. Borja dba Jimmy Tour Adventure	02/06/2024 SLR-2024-026	Commercial Snorkeling Activities	Laolao, Obyan, Oleai, Wing Crevasse & Grotto, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 02/08/2024
5.	H J 2 Corporation dba Marine World	02/13/2024 SLR-2024-027	Commercial Snorkeling Activities	Susupe, Saipan	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 02/16/2024
6.	Jangseong Corporation	02/14/2024 SS-2024-028	Land Clearing Activities	Garapan, Saipan	Shoreline	Approved* 02/16/2024
7.	The Micronesian Telecommunications Corporation dba IT&E	02/05/2024 TSWPICH-2024-003	Fiber Optic, Copper Installation & Connection – Existing Telephone Cable Repairs & Replacement	Island-Wide, Tinian	Shoreline, Wetlands & Mangroves, Ports & Industrial, Coastal Hazards	Approved* 02/15/2024

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

Printed copies of *Rota Special Resource Study* now available

The National Park Service is pleased to announce that printed copies of the *Rota Special Resource Study* are now available at key locations in the CNMI. Limited copies are available at the Rota Mayor's Office and the Public Library on Rota, as well as at the American Memorial Park Visitor Center on Saipan.

A digital version of the study can be accessed and downloaded via the project website at: parkplanning.nps.gov/rotastudy. The website additionally includes a Chamorro language version of the study's executive summary.

The study process was completed, and the report transmitted to Congress on Oct. 5, 2023. The study finds that the prehistoric, historic, and limestone forest resources of Rota are nationally significant and that areas of the island are suitable for inclusion in the national park system. It additionally finds that limestone forest and Chamorro archeological sites within the study area are conditionally feasible for inclusion in the national park system, dependent on support from the CNMI government and the development of a management agreement, support from Rota and CNMI residents, and sufficient funding for park operations.

Analysis of existing management and several additional management frameworks does not demonstrate a clear need for direct NPS management at this time. The people of Rota have protected their resources for generations through cultural practices, local laws, federal financial assistance, and the dedicated efforts of CNMI agencies. The exceptional integrity of Rota's cultural and natural resources is evidence of the community's impressive and centuries-long tradition of stewardship. The CNMI government is continuing this tradition of resource stewardship while also providing visitor access and information about Rota's significant sites. Because the area does not demonstrate a need for NPS management, the special resource study concludes that Rota does not meet all criteria necessary to be considered eligible for designation as a new unit of the national park system.

Answers to frequently asked questions have been posted on the project website at: ParkPlanning-Answers to Frequently Asked Questions: October 2023 (nps.gov). ***(PR)***

Labor recovers $52,000 in tips, unpaid wages, damages from two Saipan restaurants

An investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division found R&I Corp., operating as Mura Ichiban Restaurant and Nam Dae Moon Restaurant, illegally kept credit card tips from its tipped employees at both locations, failed to pay at least federal minimum wage for all hours worked and did not pay overtime wages to several Mura Ichiban employees, all violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

In all, a total of $12,316 in withheld credit card tips for 10 employees, $11,093 in unpaid minimum wage for six employees, $2,736 in unpaid overtime for six employees, and $26,146 in liquidated damages for 13 employees were recovered in back wages and $1,500 in civil money penalties were assessed.

"The U.S. Department of Labor is determined to fight against wage theft in the restaurant industry," said Wage and Hour Division district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu. "This restaurant recklessly violated their employees' most basic rights, including pocketing a portion of their tips. This case should remind restaurant employers that all tips, including those left on customer credit cards, are the property of the workers who earned them."

Workers can use the division's Workers Owed Wages search tool to see if they are owed back wages collected by the division. Employers and workers can contact the Wage and Hour Division for help and assistance at its toll-free number, 1-866-4-US-WAGE. Learn more about the Wage and Hour Division, including the agency's restaurants compliance assistance toolkit and an overview about the FLSA protections for restaurant workers. Workers and employers alike can help ensure hours worked and pay are accurate by downloading the department's Android and IOS Timesheet App for free in English or Spanish. ***(PR)***

SHEFA spring application 2024 deadline on Feb. 28

Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance said the deadline to apply and submit supporting documents for its spring 2024 scholarships is Feb. 28, 2024.

All interested new, ongoing, and returning applicants must apply online at www.saipan-shefa.com. ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE (1) AUTOMOTIVE PARTS SPECIALIST

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:
Must be knowledgeable on the functions of automotive, heavy equipment & power generator parts and know the basic functions of various tools & equipment related to the industry; Provide auto parts answers and solutions for retail and wholesale customers in person or over the phone; Use parts knowledge to assist other NAPA team members answer questions for customers; Analyze customer operations to ascertain future parts, service, automotive and truck requirements; Develop and achieve maximum sales volume consistent with sales projections on parts and labor sales; Advise or assist customers in such areas as inventory selection and control, service available, new products and services, etc.; Take orders, introduces new products and promotions, reemphasize existing products and service and provide necessary instructions as needed; Maintain weekly customer call sheets, stating summary of calls made; Determine sizes with precision measuring tools and knowledge in Total Automated Management System (TAMS); Read catalogs to determine descriptions of malfunctions; May be required to check or look over machine, product, or car to determine what part is needed; May be required to handle/dispose/confine/transport used engine oil or other hazardous waste from truck, automobile or power generator engine in compliance with OSHA and EPA; Recommend substitute parts or show customers how to modify parts; Look up stock numbers and prices for parts in catalogs or computers; Perform other related duties as assigned.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:
- High School Diploma/GED or Graduation from Trade or Vocational School (emphasis in auto mechanic) foreign equivalence is acceptable;
- 24 months experience in auto mechanic, auto repair shop or similar field;
- Certification from EPA and/or OSHA on Hazardous Materials Safety Awareness required.

Working Conditions: Full-time (40 hours per week).
Location: Bisnes Mami (Saipan), Inc. dba Napa Auto and Truck Parts, Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Rd., San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

Satya Venkata Vallabhaneni, General Manager
Bisnes Mami (Saipan), Inc. dba NAPA Auto and Truck Parts
P.O. Box 504640
Chalan Monsignor Guerrero Rd., San Jose
Saipan, MP 96950
Contact no. 670-234-0475
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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Egyptian diplomat says the obvious about Hamas out loud

Egypt's top diplomat delivered a blunt assessment last week of the turmoil in the Middle East. Deluded apologists protesting in the United States and elsewhere in support for Hamas terrorists should pay heed.

Speaking in Germany at a security conference on Saturday, Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry criticized Hamas. "The organization is outside the Palestinian consensus," he said, the Jerusalem Post reported, "which recognizes Israel and wants to reach negotiations with it, because (Hamas) is not ready to give up its support for violence."

He also said his nation had "no intention of providing safe areas" in Egyptian territory "for the Palestinians" if Israel launches an offensive in Rafah, near the Egyptian border, but "we will deal with it with the necessary humanity."

Shoukry's comments highlight two points. First, Hamas' stated goal of using its barbaric Oct. 7 attack on Israel to push the Arab world to stand alongside the terror group in an effort to eradicate the Jewish state have failed. Second, the remarks vindicate Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stance that a negotiated cease-fire with Hamas would only embolden the terror group.

Egypt has been involved in negotiations between Israel and Hamas to end the hostilities. But Shoukry is acknowledging that Hamas would use any cessation of violence to simply recover and reload before eventually resuming its savage attacks on Israel. Hamas leaders have publicly proclaimed that they plan to carry out more massacres like the one that provoked the current fighting and left 1,200 innocent Israelis dead.

"I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us," Taher El-Nounou, a Hamas media adviser, told The New York Times in November.

This is the context in which President Joe Biden—desperate to appease the hard-left activists who now dominate the Democratic Party—leans on Netanyahu to temper his nation's military response and to take extraordinary measures to minimize civilian casualties.

As Shoukry so aptly noted, Hamas remains wedded to violence and the elimination of Israel. Until the terror group recognizes that this strategy will lead it to ruin and violates civilized norms—and it would help if more Arab leaders exhibited Shoukry's political courage—Israel has every right to take up arms against those who kill its civilians and threaten its very existence.

Egypt has now implicitly acknowledged this. How about the Biden administration?

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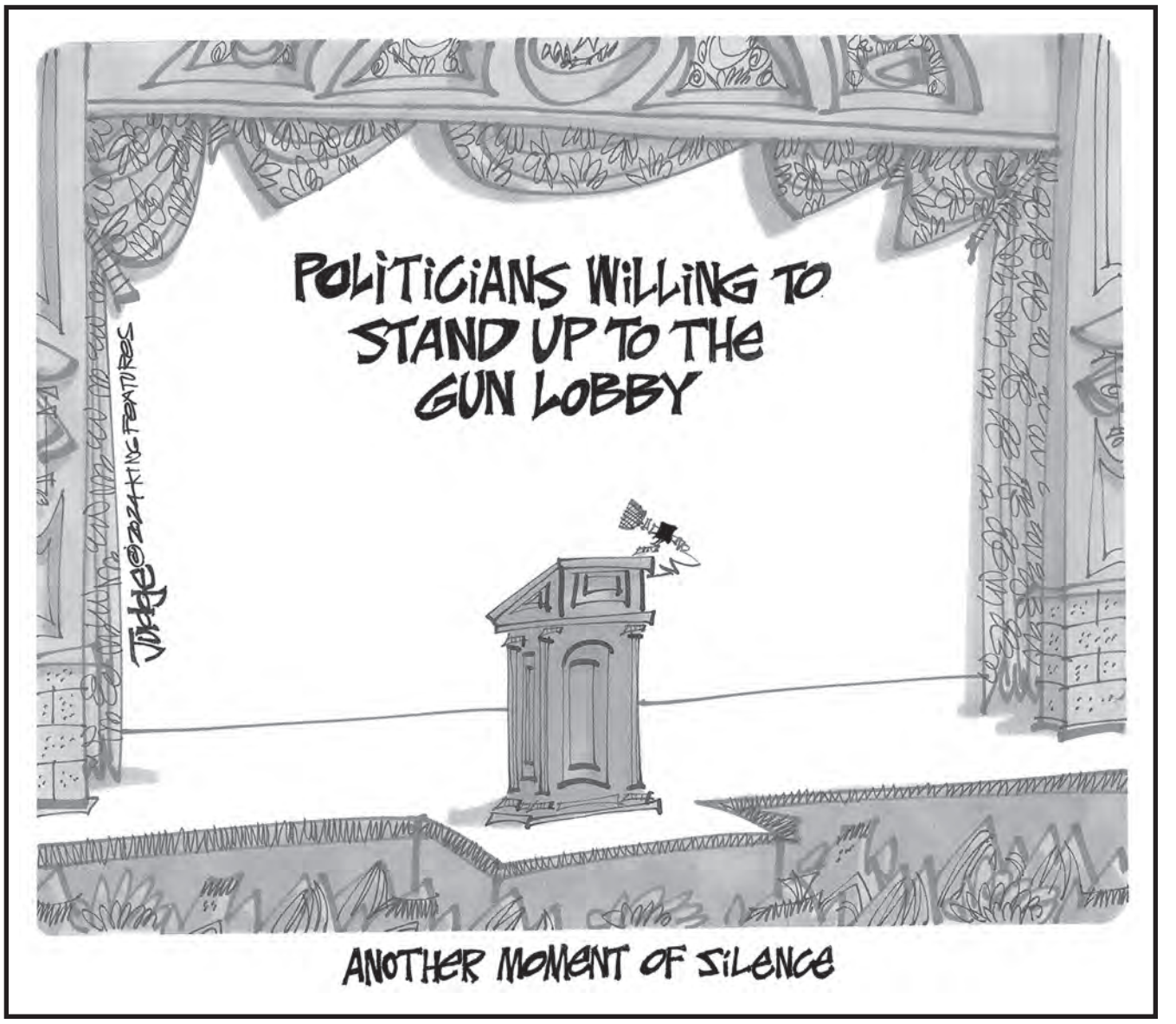


Is America still the indispensable nation?

By RICHARD C. LONGWORTH
Chicago Tribune

Richard C. Longworth, a former Tribune foreign correspondent, is a distinguished fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Back in 1998, Madeleine Albright, then the secretary of state, called the United States the "indispensable nation." She meant that this country, armed with unmatchable force and influence, stood at the helm of a web of alliances and global organizations that guided world events. More than 50 years after the invention of nuclear weapons, the U.S. had presided over a Pax Americana that had kept the peace among the nuclear powers.

Today, more than a quarter century later, are we still the indispensable nation? The answer is yes—but probably not for much longer. The era of Pax Americana is ending. It is ending not because any rival nation can or will replace us, but because we are abdicating.

Americans weary of leading the world are about to find out that there are worse burdens than leadership, and one of them is the global anarchy that lurks around the corner.

Albright spoke at a unique moment in history, just after the Cold War ended, when America was the sole superpower, the only pole in a unipolar world. Russia was thoroughly whipped, China was just beginning its amazing transformation into a modern nation, the European Union was focused on its own expansion, and regional powers like India and Iran sought little power outside their own frontiers. Even the French agreed: They called us the hyperpuissance—the hyperpower.

All this was based on a combination of hard power—sheer military might and economic clout—and soft power, or the attractiveness of American civil society—its culture, its jazz and pop music, its universities, its openness to innovation, its status as the world's leading democracy.

A lot of murky water has flowed under the bridge since then. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were failures, if not crimes. The subprime mortgage crisis of 2008 and the subsequent Great Recession soiled the reputation for economic acumen. Even our ability to run our own country has been shaken by racism and rampant gun violence, our shameful economic inequality and, not least, Donald Trump's attack on our democracy.

And yet, amazingly, we're still numero uno. We're the only military power with a global reach. Our military budget outspends those of all our foes combined. Our economy is still the world's biggest. The dollar is still the dominant world currency, and English is the global language. Students from around the world flock to our universities. We remain the maternity ward for innovations waiting to be born. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Taylor Swift wow audiences worldwide. Those thousands of migrants fighting to get into the United States may be a political problem, but they're also a compliment: It's a problem that China and Russia certainly don't have.

All this rests on trust and always has. To a degree that few Americans realize, the world trusts us to do the right thing and defend the right values. It sees us as the defender of the institutions—NATO, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations—that, though flawed themselves, oversee the world order. It believes that America keeps its promises. It expects us to play fair. If we haven't always lived up to this reputation, it's the reputation we've got, and it's key to our world leadership, to that Pax Americana that, for nearly 80 years now, has kept nuclear war at bay.

When Albright spoke, we had no real rivals or challengers. Now we do, but none is ready to take over as the world leader. Iran and India are regional powers. Russia can cause a lot of trouble, but it is still an incompetent giant, a gas station with nukes. China is the only other plausible world power, but it is friendless, with neighbors but no allies and an authoritarian government that seems determined to stifle growth and innovation for the sake of its one-party control. The EU has soft power aplenty but no foreign or defense policy to exert its influence on the world.

But if we are not about to be dethroned, we could abdicate. This is what the battle in Congress over aid to Ukraine is all about. We have made Ukraine an ally and the protection of its democracy our national interest. Other NATO nations have fallen in line behind our leadership. They did so because they trusted us to

See AMERICA on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

I can't run

By JIM RAYPHAND
Special to Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and is a former executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

My college lacrosse teammates and I were required to run two miles in 12 minutes (or less) at the beginning of each season or we'd be made to run before each daily practice until we succeeded—a fitting test, I suppose, of the will and physical prowess needed for the sport. It usually took me three or four tries before making time each year—some did it on their first try. A few others never could run it in time, so they kept our sideline benches warm throughout the season—not fun, especially during the winter months.

Flash forward to present day in what might now be the winter of my discontent wherein, for about the last three to four months, I literally can't run at all due to sudden and severe foot and leg pains that seemed to come out of nowhere. I've been self-diagnosing and, at first, I thought I was developing the "G" word—lord knows enough people around me have bouts with gout regularly—and then (based on something I saw on an infomercial) I was convinced I had something called plantar fasciitis (and, of course, I would need the product they were peddling). The truth is I don't yet know what's causing such debilitating pain in my foot, but someone was kind enough to point out, "No offense, but it's most likely your weight." Another friend of mine likes to say, "The old foundation can no longer support the extensions on the house"— truth to power here. It is quite unnerving to be so blatantly and painfully confronted by the prospect of my own physical decay.

The bigger truth is that we can't run from the truth—"a lie doesn't become truth, wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good just because" we manage to avoid it. Put another way, we can try to run, but we cannot hide particularly from ourselves.

In what comes as no surprise, my life of excess (at least in terms of overeating, drinking and general sloth-like existence over the course of the last 20 years) seems to be catching up and for the past few months has nearly immobilized me entirely (emphasis on nearly, it's going to take a lot more than foot and leg pains to keep me down or take me out entirely—I haven't given up yet). We hear a lot about the potential consequences of unhealthy living, namely revolving around the fear of an early death, but perhaps not enough is said about the toll of physical and mental decay on our quality of life. Nobody really ever tells you how much the aches and pains of a fat and aged body hurt nor do we hear much about self-doubt and mental battles that go hand in hand. The combination, for me, of reckless behavior in my so-called prime (until present really) and the inevitable wear and tear of aging has been damaging and, for emphasis, painful. While I dread the idea of spending my waning years on the sideline benches of life, I find myself lacking in will or physical prowess to do much about it beyond talking and thinking. The insanity of doing the same things over and over expecting a different result is real. Pathetic. I know.

That is, no doubt, way too much information in yet another gut-spilling editorial, but perhaps my truth will resonate and help in someone else's journey.

If I could offer advice "based on nothing more than my own meandering experience" (in the famous words of a song by Baz Luhrmann), ♫♪

"Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind, you will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they fail. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your mind, the kind that blindsides you at 4pm on some idle Tuesday.

"Don't be reckless with other people's hearts. Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours.

"Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long, and in the end, it's only with yourself.

"Remember compliments you receive. Forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how.

"Be kind to your knees, you'll miss them when they're gone.

"Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance. So are everybody else's.

"Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own.

"Be nice to your siblings. They're your best link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you in the future.

"Respect your elders. Be careful with whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it.

"Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling for more than it's worth." ♪♫

Life really does seem to go by in the blink of an eye.

There is no shortage of irony, given recent revelations (if not acceptance) of my personal physical and mental deterioration, in the fact that I've spent the better part of the last 25 years advocating for the needs of individuals with disabilities and currently work at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation more commonly known as OVR.

OVR was established for eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment or supported employment in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency. To be eligible for the VR program, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment, require and be able to benefit from VR services to achieve employment and maximize career goals. Of the total funding received the Basic Support grant, OVR must set aside 15% in reserve to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 who may be potentially eligible for the VR program.

While it may have always been true, it's only recently becoming more apparent even to myself that "I'm not only the [OVR director], but I'm also a [potential] client."

For more information on Basic Support and/or Pre-ETS services through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, please feel free to contact the office at (670) 322-6537/8 or online at www.ovrgov.net.

Single mothers like me are easy scapegoats. But the case for marriage is a myth

By LYZ LENZ
Los Angeles Times

Lyz Lenz is a mother, journalist and author. Her new book is This American Ex-Wife.

I am happier as a single mother than I ever was as a married one. Despite the fact that 47% of Americans think single mothers are bad for society, becoming one made my life and my children's lives much better. This was made clear to me during the COVID-19 shutdown, when my kids were in third grade and kindergarten and Zoom school would often drive all three of us to tears. I was making near poverty-level wages, still trying to dig myself out of the debt of divorce and the cost of living.

At one point a friend texted me to ask how things were going. "I can't imagine doing this pandemic as a single mother," she said.

I took a breath and looked around my house. The light was pouring in through the windows, my cat was asleep on my lap. I was working hard and exhausted and afraid. But I was also so happy because for the first time in my life, I had the space to do the work I loved.

Court-mandated 50/50 custody meant my ex was doing his share of the online schooling and child rearing. My friend's husband had been ignoring their kids to focus on his sourdough starter project. By the next year, she too was a single mother.

Single mothers have been blamed for everything including crime rates, school shootings and poverty. Alone and without a man, they are the specter of our cultural anxiety. People wring their hands and wonder who their sons will look up to without husbands around. As if sons can't love and admire their mothers and see them as models for humanity.

Single mothers are more likely than married women to be poor and to face the pressures of the wage gap, and the lack of affordable child care and healthcare in the U.S. But single mothers themselves are not the cause of these deficiencies; we are merely a byproduct.

Although I chose to be a single mother, our society often doesn't acknowledge that many single parents were forced into that situation due to issues such as abusive partners, incarceration and lack of reproductive rights. Single mothers are easy scapegoats for problems they didn't create. We are shoved into poverty through systemic problems and then blamed for it.

In "The Blueprint to Save America," the Republican Study Committee's fiscal report from June 2022, the group repeatedly emphasizes that marriage and family should be the focus of government spending instead of the social safety net. The report argues that it's being a single parent (specifically a single mother, as they never mention single fathers) that tends to lead to poverty. The solution? Force people into marriage in the name of fiscal responsibility. This follows a pattern: The Moynihan Report from 1965 and George W. Bush's Healthy Marriage Initiative also pushed for women and mothers to enter into marriages, rather than advocating for funding a social safety net.

But often walking out of single motherhood into marriage is like walking from one cage into a slightly bigger one. Reports smearing single mothers are ubiquitous, but we rarely consider that marriage itself can be a form of entrapment. For example, husbands add seven hours of domestic labor per week for their wives, while a wife reduces her husband's labor by an hour a week. Additionally, almost 20% of American marriages involve some form of physical violence, with emotional abuse even more prevalent. Women do more child-rearing and more adjusting of their careers to accommodate family and domestic partnership. And there is a lot of evidence that supports the idea that divorced women are happier. Not to mention that single mothers have more leisure time and get more sleep than their married counterparts.

I am not surprised that single mothers are seen as a negative for society. Free women are destabilizing. Their existence, their radical happiness upsets our cultural ideas of what love and family ought to look like. I am glad it does.

As a single mother, I've been forced to build a new kind of life for myself. I own my own house and I've filled it with pets, books and friends. I do less housework than I did when I was married. I realize part of this is the privilege of being able to find work that pays my mortgage and puts food on the table. But part of it is the equality I gained through 50/50 custody, which gave me time to work—something I never had when I was carrying the bulk of the emotional and physical labor during my marriage.

Experiences of single motherhood are vast and diverse. When I was broke and struggling in the early days of single motherhood, I would remind myself that I'd been poor before. But what I had never been was free. And in 2024, that feels radical.

AMERICA

From page 8

keep our promise. Trump and Congress—or, rather, the Republican leadership in Congress—now want us to break that promise and forfeit that trust.

For the first time since World War II, one of the major American political parties has become isolationist—not just in its leadership but in its constituency. A recent poll by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs showed that 53% of Republicans think the U.S. should stay out of world affairs—the first time in the poll's 50-year history that any major party has turned its back on the world.

As noted, if we pull back from leadership, no other nations are ready and able to take over. But they will try, and that way lies global anarchy, a power vacuum drawing in any number of nations, many of them nuclear-armed.

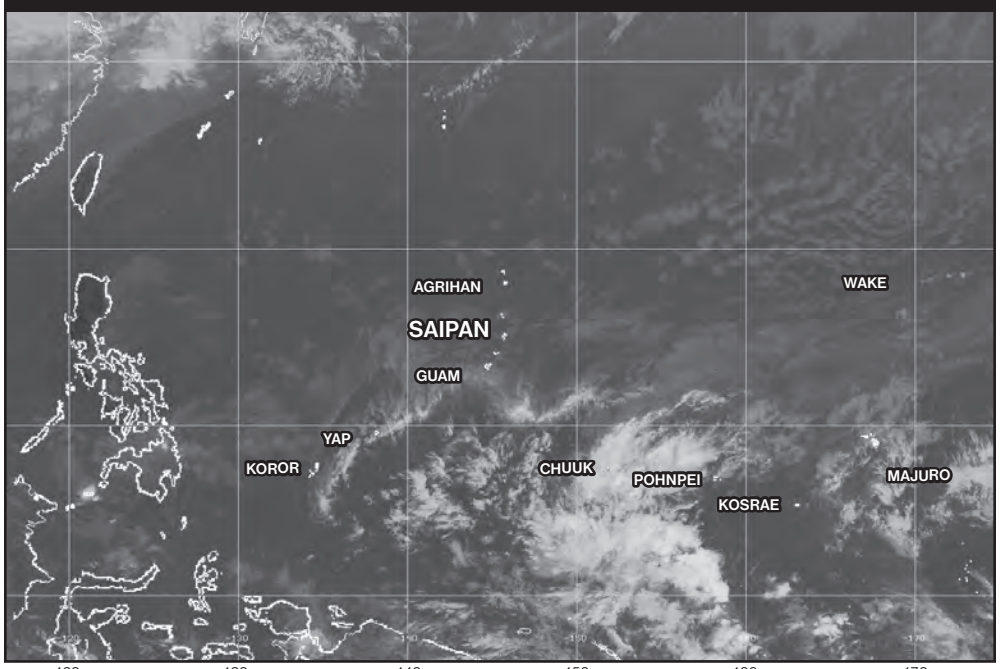
Goodbye, Pax Americana. Goodbye, pax.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
83 / 76°	84 / 76°	85 / 76°	86 / 77°	86 / 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:15 AM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows mostly cloudy skies and scattered light showers across the Marianas this morning. The Tanapag buoy reveals combined seas of 9 to 11 feet from the northeast, composed primarily of northeast swell with some northeast wind waves mixed in.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	85° / 75°
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Cloudy	84° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	78° / 56°
Beijing	Fair	33° / 26°
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	79° / 71°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	78° / 68°
London	Sunny	82° / 54°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	79° / 56°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	84° / 73°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 70°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 70°
New York	Cloudy	41° / 30°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	53° / 46°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	37° / 27°
Busan	Cloudy	45° / 39°
Rome	Rain	54° / 43°
Salem	Thunderstorms	67° / 40°
San Francisco	Sunny	69° / 49°
Seoul	Cloudy	36° / 30°
Tokyo	Cloudy	47° / 42°
Washington, DC	Rain	46° / 28°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:38 AM	6:22 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Monday	6:36 AM	6:23 PM
Tuesday	6:35 AM	6:23 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:47 AM	5:24 PM
Saturday	-	6:25 AM	6:13 PM
Sunday	-	7:00 AM	7:00 PM
Monday	-	7:34 AM	7:45 PM
Tuesday	-	8:06 AM	8:31 PM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:21 AM	Low Tide	-0.24
8:19 AM	High Tide	1.62
1:49 PM	Low Tide	0.94
6:43 PM	High Tide	1.64

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Magazine donates $20,000 to non-profits in Guam and Saipan

Guam Business Magazine announced Feb. 21, 2024, that it is donating $20,000 to four non-profits in Guam and Saipan.

The Guam Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Nicolette Baldovino Community Foundation Inc., the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, and the Northern Marianas College's NMC Foundation will each receive $5,000.

The donations are from funds raised at the 2023 *Guam Business Magazine* Executive of the Year Gala, which was held on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

A media conference in Guam on Feb. 21 was attended by Nenita C. Baldovino, president of the Nicolette Baldovino Community Foundation Inc. and members of the Island Family Pharmacy team. The late Nicolette Baldovino was the inspiration and founder of Island Family Pharmacy.

Baldovino said, "When Maureen [Maratita, publisher of *Guam Business Magazine*] told me that the foundation is one the recipients of the EOY proceeds, what can I say except thank you very much. It has always been a passion of my daughter Nicolette to help the people of Guam. With your donation, this will really help continue my daughter's legacy and our mission to help the people who are uninsured and underinsured, especially women with breast cancer and those suffering from diabetes."

Chita A. Blaise, CEO and board members of the Guam Chapter of the American Red Cross also attended the media conference.

GUAM BUSINESS MAGAZINE

Guam beneficiaries of the *Guam Business Magazine* 2023 Executive of the Year program included the Guam Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Nicolette Baldovino Community Foundation Inc. Chita A. Blaise, CEO of the Guam Chapter and board members and Nita C. Baldovino, president of the Nicolette Baldovino Community Foundation, as well as members of the Island Family Pharmacy attended the media conference.

Blaise said, "The American Red Cross has had a tough year with Super Typhoon Mawar. The island is still reeling from the devastation. On behalf of the board members, staff, and victims of the disaster caused by Super Typhoon Mawar, who will benefit from your generous donation, our heartfelt thanks to you and your vision. The EOY has been in existence for some [40] years, and I take off my hat to you. Thank you so much."

The *Guam Business Magazine* Executive of the Year is an annual award program that recognizes deserving executives who have made a difference to the island communities of Micronesia, as well as raising funds for deserving non-profit organizations. ***(PR)***

Sailor from Saipan honored as Warfighter of the Day

By JOSHUA CABAL
MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST
SECOND CLASS

ATLANTIC OCEAN— Saipan native seaman Nadia Mendiola was recognized as Warfighter of The Day aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* (CVN 73), Jan 19, 2024.

Mendiola

Warfighter of the Day is a command program where the ship's captain personally recognizes an exemplary sailor for their accomplishments. Mendiola was selected by her leadership for this honor. Her motivation is always inspiring to her peers and represents the "Spirit of Freedom," the ship's nickname.

Mendiola said her favorite part about her job is being able to engage with sailors and take care of their needs.

She has served in the Navy for 14 months, Mendiola is a 2012 graduate of Saipan Southern High School.

"Serving in the Navy means everything to me," said Mendiola. "I have never seen my family so proud of me. I see a positive change and potential that I had never imagined for myself."

Today Mendiola serves as a personnel specialist.

Aircraft carriers, such as USS *George Washington*, project power and presence worldwide by serving as the cornerstone of a Carrier Strike Group and launching and landing various types of aircraft.

George Washington is underway in support of carrier qualifications.

USS *George Washington* is named after the first President of the United States.

The ship's motto is "First in War, First in Peace."

For Full Story: https://navyoutreach.blogspot.com/2024/02/saipan-native-honored-as-warfighter-of.html.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Man Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950|
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

PORT OF SAIPAN CPA OFFICE LEAK REPAIRS PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-22

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Office Leak Repairs at the Captain George F. Fleming Memorial Building at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-001-22.

The project is being funded by the CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi L. Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri N. Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Wednesday, March 13, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 14, 2024

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400036

SUBMISSION DATE: March 08, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Rehabilitation of Roll Off Container Bay Dumpster"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after February 09, 2024 at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of pay-ment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on February 27, 2024, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base,** Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on March 01, 2024 to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division,** 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL ROOF LEAK REPAIRS Project No. CPA-SA-001-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the Terminal Roof Leak Repairs Project at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SA-001-24.

The project is being funded by the Commonwealth Ports Authority and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, March 8, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 12, 2024

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
4 Year-Territorial Transportation Improvement Plan

NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW

AMENDMENT to the CNMI TTIP FY'23-26

Please visit dpw.gov.mp or transit.cnmi.gov to view Amendment 1 to the plan. For more information or to submit comments, email Lorraine Villagomez at lvillagomez.highway@dpw.gov.mp or Lauren Terlaje at lterlaje.highway@dpw.gov.mp for FHWA funded projects or call (670) 234-9828. For COTA's FTA Funded Projects, call (670) 664-2682 or email Alfreda Camacho Maratita at alfredac.maratita@gov.mp.

COMMENT PERIOD:
FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 22, 2024

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

ITB NO.: RFP24-BECQ/DEQ-42400031

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2024
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"TO CONDUCT CONTINUNING EDUCATION UNIT TRAIN-ING FOR WATER OPERATORS IN THE FIELD OF WATER TREATMENT (LEVELS 1 THROUGH 4) AND WATER DISTRIBUTION (LEVELS 1 THROUGH 4) ON A QUARTERLY BASIS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR WITH POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL THEREAFTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY BY MARCH 8, 2024, TO MRS. ZABRINA S. CRUZ VIA EMAIL AT zabrina.shai@becq.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD V. SALAS
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Business

Tourist who fell in love with Saipan opens Gangnam Chicken in CK

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Sang Kyun Kim visited Saipan about 10 years ago and loved its pristine waters and island-style living so much he came back and opened Gangnam Chicken in Chalan Kanoa last December.

The 48-year-old used to run a successful chicken restaurant in Seoul, South Korea before deciding to pack everything up and start anew 3,000 or so kilometers away in the capital of the CNMI.

Aside from his affinity with Saipan, Kim also simply loves to cook.

"The reason I chose the restaurant industry is because I feel happy when someone enjoys my menu."

Obviously as suggested already by its name, Gangnam Chicken is a restaurant that primarily serves Gangnam-style chicken, which is a sticky spicy grilled chicken recipe with a nice mix of Korean and Chinese flavors.

Kim said they will also soon start serving everyone's favorite Korean grilled pork belly dish, Samgyupsal, with a variety of bonchon.

So far, his loyal customers seem to can't have enough of Gangman Chicken's fried chicken, soy chicken, and volcano chicken (hint, it's very spicy hence the name). Their fourth chicken flavor is sweet chicken and they also offer side dishes like rice cakes, French fries, gunmandu (Koream gyoza), and pineapple slices (dessert).

Their chicken costs from $20 to $25 for 12 pieces and $12 to $15 for six pieces. You can also mix and match the flavors to your heart's content, according to Kim.

MARK RABAGO

Gangnam Chicken is located on the first floor of Shining Star Hotel (formerly Koreana Hotel) along the street across Dial Rent-to-Own in Chalan Kanoa.

MARK RABAGO

The 55-seat Gangnam Chicken is open from 11am to 11pm everyday (up to 1am if customers request).

As for what makes Gangnam Chicken different from other Korean chicken restaurant joints on Saipan, Kim is proud to say that his chicken has an inviting aroma, an even more delectable taste, very moist and tender, and not as salty as his competitors.

As part of its soft opening promotion, Gangnam Chicken is giving away free Korean chicken radish to diners.

Located on the first floor of Shining Star Hotel (formerly Koreana Hotel along the street across Dial Rent-to-Own in Chalan Kanoa), Gangnam Chicken can comfortably accommodate up to 55 dine-in customers. It's open from 11am to 11pm everyday (up to 1am if customers request). For more information or for reservations, call (670) 234-2424 and (670) 788-7880.

MARK RABAGO

Gangnam Chicken primarily serves Gangnam-style chicken, which is a sticky spicy grilled chicken recipe with a nice mix of Korean and Chinese flavors.

MARK RABAGO

Gangnam Chicken owner Sang Kyun Kim.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Toyota recalls 280,000 pickups, SUVs because transmissions can deliver power even when in neutral

DETROIT (AP)—Toyota is recalling about 280,000 pickup trucks and SUVs in the U.S. to fix a transmission problem that can let the vehicles creep forward while in neutral. The recall covers certain Toyota Tundra pickups and Lexus LX 600 SUVs from the 2022 and 2023 model years. Also included are 2023 and 2024 Toyota Sequoia SUVs. Toyota said Wednesday that certain parts of the vehicles' automatic transmissions may not immediately disengage when shifted into neutral. That can transfer some engine power to the wheels. The vehicles could creep forward at low speeds on flat surfaces if the brakes aren't applied, increasing the risk of a crash. The company wouldn't say whether there have been any crashes or injuries. Dealers will update the transmission software to fix the problem. Owners will be notified by late April, Toyota said.

FDA warns against smartwatches, rings that claim to measure blood sugar without needles

Smartwatches and rings that claim to measure blood sugar levels for medical purposes without piercing the skin could be dangerous and should be avoided, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned Wednesday. The caution applies to any watch or ring, regardless of brand, that claims to measure blood glucose levels in a noninvasive way, the agency said. The FDA said it has not authorized any such device. The agency's notice doesn't apply to smartwatch apps linked to sensors, such as continuous glucose monitoring systems that measure blood sugar directly. Roughly 37 million Americans have diabetes. People with the disease aren't able to effectively regulate their blood sugar because their bodies either don't make enough of the hormone insulin or they have become resistant to insulin. To manage the condition, they must regularly check their blood sugar levels with a finger prick blood test or with a sensor that places needles just under the skin to monitor glucose levels continuously.

Boeing ousts head of 737 jetliner program weeks after panel blowout on flight over Oregon

SEATTLE (AP)—Boeing said Wednesday that the head of its 737 jetliner program is leaving the company in an executive shake-up weeks after a door panel blew out on a flight over Oregon, renewing questions about safety at the company. Boeing announced that Ed Clark, who had been with the company for nearly 18 years and led the 737 program since early 2021, was leaving immediately. Clark oversaw the factory in Renton, Washington, where final assembly took place on the Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9 involved in last month's accident. Federal investigators said bolts needed to help keep a panel called a door plug in place were missing after repair work on the plane. Katie Ringgold, a vice president in charge of delivering 737s to airlines, will succeed Clark as vice president and general manager of the 737 program and the Renton factory, according to an email to employees from Stan Deal, the CEO of Boeing's commercial airplanes division.

Court lifts US coal sales moratorium in setback for Dems, environmentalists

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—A U.S. appeals court on Wednesday struck down a moratorium on coal leasing from federal lands in a move that could open the door to future coal sales from vast, publicly owned reserves of the fuel that's a major source of climate-changing greenhouse gases.

The ruling from a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is a setback for environmentalists and Democratic officials who worked for years to curtail the federal coal leasing program.

Yet it's uncertain how much demand there will be from the mining industry for new leases: Coal production from federal lands dropped sharply over the past decade after many electric utilities switched to less polluting sources of power generation such as natural gas and renewables.

More than 260 million tons of coal, or almost half of the nation's total, was mined by private companies from leases on federal land in 2022, the most recent figures available. That compares to more than 400 million tons of coal mined from federal lands in 2014.

Most of the mining occurs in Western states including Wyoming, Montana and Colorado.

The leasing moratorium—originally enacted in 2016 under former President Barack Obama—didn't halt mining. Rather, it prohibited federal lease sales that are often crucial for companies seeking to expand their operations.

MARIANAS HIGH SCHOOL

55 YEARS OF *Excellence* IN EDUCATION

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

Home of the proverbial Mighty Dolphins, Marianas High School at 55 continues a legacy of providing its students a holistic approach to education—cultivating the minds, character, and dedicated community spirit of those who walk its hallowed halls.

As the largest and oldest public high school in the Northern Marianas, MHS has a storied legacy of success as an institution that has produced scholars who excel in local and international academic competitions and individuals who have made a name for themselves in sports, arts, and community service.

Core value

In the five and a half decades of its existence, MHS has been guided by a set of core values and principles anchored in fostering a culture of excellence in academics and in character development to form the foundation of its approach to education, said MHS principal Jonathan Aguon.

Central among these values is a commitment to fostering a culture of excellence, where high academic standards, continuous improvement, and a dedication to lifelong learning are paramount.

"Complementing the mindset of academic excellence is MHS' belief in instilling the principles of integrity, honesty, and respect among its students so they can become well-rounded individuals who can navigate their educational journey while preparing them for their future endeavors," said Aguon. "While the school remains as one of the oldest educational institutions in the CNMI, it will continue to stand for its legacy and pride as a school that aspires for education excellence."

Outside the classroom

An MHS education goes beyond the doors of its campus, Aguon said, to reach the community outside where its alumni's contributions have played a role in the fabric of the community. From championship-winning sports teams to award-winning arts programs, the school has been a source of pride and inspiration for residents young and old.

"MHS emphasizes community engagement and service. We encourage our students to be active participants in their local and global communities and to uphold values of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility. We prioritize inclusivity and diversity, and we embrace the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and abilities of all our students and staff," he said. These values have served as guiding principles for MHS, shaping its educational philosophy and ensuring a holistic approach to student development over its long history."

Undeniably, with so many MHS alumni going on to make an impact on the larger CNMI community, the contributions of its students, teachers, staff, and alumni have enriched the community and strengthened the bonds that unite the CNMI.

Aguon emphasized that MHS fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students are encouraged to explore their interests, pursue their passions, and develop a strong sense of self-awareness and resilience.

Through mentorship programs, internships, and community partnerships, the school connects students with real-world experiences and opportunities for professional development, ensuring they are well-prepared to navigate the challenges of higher education and the workforce with confidence and adaptability."

MHS curriculum

An MHS education starts with a curriculum that Aguon describes as crafted from the school's "unwavering commitment to personalized learning experiences tailored to individual student needs and aspirations."

Anchoring the school's wide range of course offerings is its robust fine arts and performance arts program that prepares and hones student talents in a gamut of multimedia pursuits that include Speech & Debate, stage acting, and video production, among others.

As a testament to the stellar talents of its students, MHS' Rhythm N' Harmony Glee Club is known for its musical performances that have scored many accolades within the CNMI and Guam. Also, MHS is currently the only public school that has a concert band.

MHS students have also earned widespread respect and admiration from their peers with their excellence

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Here's to 55 years of inspiring minds, shaping futures, and making a difference in the lives of students.

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on 55 years of dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow.
Happy anniversary Marianas High School!

From the management and staff of
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

MHS

From page 13

in the sciences, thanks to the school's innovative programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, otherwise known in the field of education as STEM.

Notably, this has resulted in several years of MHS students winning the Real-World Design Challenge—a competition that engages high school students in solving real-world engineering challenges in areas such as aviation, aerospace, and renewable energy.

The school also has garnered wins in the Green Dream Home competition and, for the past three consecutive years beginning in 2021, MHS has taken first place in the Congressional App challenge sponsored by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

As a pioneer in Cooperative Education program, MHS has partnered with other educational institutions in the CNMI, including the Northern Marianas College, the Northern Marianas Tech Institute, the Latte Training Academy, and the Guam Marianas Training Center in opening the doors for students who want to focus on specific career and technical fields that set students on the path toward certification during or post-high school. These programs are focused on the hospitality industry, education, and nursing and are mainstays in the school's career and technical education program offerings.

Trades education

Historically, MHS has been the only high school to offer auto-mechanics classes where students can learn about basic vehicle maintenance and repair work. Students also get to sharpen their basic welding skills by taking the body and fender course.

For the past several years, automotive technology classes have been held to a minimum mainly due to the past typhoon damage sustained by the former trades shop where the classes were being held. Aguon says more slots for the courses will be reopened with the construction of the new state-of-the-art two-story structure called a CTE Center that is expected to be built by 2027. This building is envisioned to be a hub that will set students on career pathways that will lead them toward certification, higher education, or a skilled workforce.

This new building is expected to house the automotive technology classes and will share space with Business & Career Education, Cosmetology Academy, Teacher Academy, Health Sciences, and Theatre Arts programs. That means the facility will have an automotive garage equipped with vehicle lifts, a culinary arts kitchen, a nursing lab, a cosmetology lab, a digital and video productions studio, music room, and a full-size theater.

This year, Aguon says the school will be launching an IT specialist-device configuration program for students to learn about setting up, troubleshooting, repairing, and upgrading computers.

Topping the list of available courses at MHS is its wide selection of Advanced Placement courses, which prepares its students for college education.

Teamwork

MHS' vision of fulfilling the intellectual, socio-emotional, and cultural potential of its students and alumni rests not solely on the school's educational offerings. Aguon credit the school's dedicated team of educators and staff who all share the goal of giving students meaningful learning experiences.

Taking to heart their task of preparing students for the challenges of both higher education and the realities of a global community, Aguon says the MHS faculty fastidiously follow a path that allows them to deliver their commitment to student success.

"The school's dedicated faculty leverage innovative teaching methodologies, state-of-the-art resources, and collaborative partnerships with local communities to ensure students receive a comprehensive education that prepares them for success in higher education and the ever-evolving global landscape.

"With their acquired skills, MHS students receive the encouragement and determination to pursue extra-curricular activities, whether in clubs, competitions, and other outside organizations. Their accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our valuable staff."

MHS' success as an educational hub can't be narrowed down to just academics. Aguon says the nurturing environment the school offers its students is also a significant factor to both the growth of MHS as a learning institution and its alumni.

Aguon said MHS educators do their best to uphold the school's school motto—"Team Effort Toward Excellence"—by fostering a dynamic and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity, encourages critical thinking, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement that empowers students to excel academically, socially, and personally.

"With priority given on holistic development, MHS cultivates lifelong learners who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resilience to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world," said Aguon.

The school also offers support services for its students that include tutoring programs, academic counseling, and enrichment activities to further help them succeed academically.

"By promoting a collaborative and inclusive environment where students are encouraged to engage in intellectual discourse, pursue their interests, and take ownership of their learning journey, MHS is able to create a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, and academic inquiry that empowers both our students and staff to strive for excellence in all their endeavors," Aguon said.

Strength in diversity

The school also prioritizes inclusivity and diversity, embracing the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and abilities of all its students and staff. MHS values integrity, honesty, and respect, instilling these principles in its students as they navigate their educational journey and prepare for future endeavors.

Since 1969, MHS has been home to students who live in the central part of Saipan. It's yearly school enrollment of about 1,600 students come from a rich and diverse mix of youth of various ethnic backgrounds and beliefs—Filipinos, Chamorros, Carolinians, Chinese, and those from neighboring Micronesian islands.

Throughout its history, MHS has considered and prioritized diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental pillars of its educational philosophy, Aguon said.

Progressive approach

The school's pursuit of equality and diversity among its faculty and alumni is highlighted by its progressive approach to promoting the inclusion of students who identify as LGBTQ+.

Within the last five years, the MHS Pride Club has made strides in hosting events that recognize the LGBTQ+ community. Both MHS and its Pride Club played hosts to the Governor's Office's Pride Month Proclamation in 2023. Additionally, the student group also hosted the first-ever Rainbow Prom last year. This is an LGBTQ+

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MHS

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friendly prom event that was hosted for all high school students so that they could feel safe and included.

To promote equity, MHS has implemented policies and initiatives that give all its students access to quality education and opportunities for success, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Additionally, the school has established support systems and resources to address the unique needs of its diverse student populations, including English language learners and students from marginalized communities.

Aguon is proud to share that, through its inclusive curriculum, multicultural events, and proactive efforts to foster a sense of belonging, MHS has continually demonstrated its commitment to embracing diversity and promoting equity and inclusion for all members of its community.

Setting students up for success

Overall, MHS goes beyond preparing students solely for academic success. With its comprehensive curriculum matched by extensive support and resources, an MHS education facilitates personal and professional growth beyond graduation.

"Our diverse range of extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and career readiness programs give our students the essential life skills such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork," said Aguon.

Additionally, the supportive and inclusive learning environment MHS has encourages its alumni to explore their interests, pursue their passions, and develop a strong sense of self-awareness and resilience.

MHS today stands proud of its heritage as the cornerstone of the Marianas community. In its five and a half decades of helping shape and educate the youth of the CNMI, MHS' role in the community has turned from being a mere educational institution to a catalyst of change in our ever-evolving community.

"MHS has played a pivotal role in the community, serving both to educate and enrich the social development of its students through its various outreach programs and partnerships. These achievements underscore MHS enduring legacy of academic excellence, student empowerment, and community impact over its five decades of existence," Aguon said.

Looking ahead

MHS aspires to continue its legacy of educational excellence while adapting to the evolving needs and challenges of the 21st century. The school aims to further enhance its academic programs and resources to ensure that students are well-prepared for success in higher education and the workforce.

As the landscape of the CNMI and trends in education evolve over the years, MHS will also continue to grow and adjust to being responsive to the needs of its students so that they can be ready for life beyond high school, Aguon said.

MHS also seeks to deepen its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, he said, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported. Additionally, the school endeavors to strengthen its partnerships with the local community and leverage emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

"As MHS looks toward the future, it remains dedicated to empowering students to become lifelong learners, responsible global citizens, and leaders who positively impact their communities and the world," Aguon said.

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on reaching this remarkable milestone!
Cheers to 55 years of transforming
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Nation

White House weighing actions on the border

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

President Joe Biden arrives on Marine One to attend a fundraiser in San Francisco, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House is considering using provisions of federal immigration law repeatedly tapped by former President Donald Trump to unilaterally enact a sweeping crackdown at the southern border, according to three people familiar with the deliberations.

» Immigration powers used by Trump mulled

The administration, stymied by Republican lawmakers who rejected a negotiated border bill earlier this month, has been exploring options that President Joe Biden could deploy on his own without congressional approval, multiple officials and others familiar with the talks said. But the plans are nowhere near finalized and it's unclear how the administration would draft any such executive actions in a way that would survive the inevitable legal challenges. The officials and those familiar with the talks spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to comment on private ongoing White House discussions.

The exploration of such avenues by Biden's team underscores the pressure the president faces this election year on immigration and the border, which have been among his biggest political liabilities since he took office. For now, the White House has been hammering congressional Republicans for refusing to act on border legislation that the GOP demanded, but the administration is also aware of the political perils that high numbers of migrants could pose for the president and is scrambling to figure out how Biden could ease the problem on his own.

White House spokesperson Angelo Fernández Hernández stressed that "no executive action, no matter how aggressive, can deliver the significant policy reforms and additional resources Congress can provide and that Republicans rejected."

"The administration spent months negotiating in good faith to deliver the toughest and fairest bipartisan border security bill in decades because we need Congress to make significant policy reforms and to provide additional funding to secure our border and fix our broken immigration system," he said. "Congressional Republicans chose to put partisan politics ahead of our national security, rejected what border agents have said they need, and then gave themselves a two-week vacation."

Trump faces warning signs his fundraising prowess may have limits in 2024 campaign

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donald Trump's legendary ability to raise massive sums of political cash may be on a collision course with a new and unpleasant reality.

Campaign finance reports released this week flashed bright warning lights, showing two key committees in his political operation raised an anemic $13.8 million in January while collectively spending more than they took in. A major driver of those costs was millions of dollars in legal fees from Trump's myriad of court cases.

The latest numbers offer only a partial snapshot of the Trump operation's finances because other branches won't have to disclose their numbers until April. But Trump's diminished cashflow presents an alarming picture of the overwhelming favorite to be the GOP's presidential nominee, particularly to would-be donors who aren't eager to subsidize Trump's legal challenges.

Despite threats of vengeance by Trump, some are instead backing his last standing rival, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who outraised Trump's primary campaign committee by nearly $3 million last month.

In a statement, Trump spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt did not directly address the campaign's finances.

"President Trump's campaign is fueled by small dollar donors across the country from every background who are sick and tired of Crooked Joe Biden's record-high inflation, wide open border invasion, crime and chaos," Leavitt said. "Voters don't want four more years of misery and destruction."

When asked specifically about the numbers, a Trump spokesman texted a link to a Fox News story published Tuesday, stating that Trump was expected to raise $6 million at a fundraiser held that day.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

Congress' top China critics arrive in Taiwan for visit that's sure to draw scrutiny from Beijing

WASHINGTON (AP)—Some of Congress' staunchest critics of China are visiting Taiwan in a show of support that is certain to draw scrutiny from Beijing, which views such interactions as a challenge to its claim of sovereignty over the island. The delegation is led by Rep. Mike Gallagher, the Republican chairman of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, and Raja Krishnamoorthi, the committee's ranking Democrat. The committee was formed just last year and has held numerous hearings focused on human rights, trade, cyber intrusions and other issues central to the rising tensions between the two superpowers. "Time and again Taiwan has shown the world how to stand up to the CCP's bullying and not only survive, but thrive," Gallagher said in a press release issued after the group's arrival. He went on to say that promoting deeper ties between between the leaders and economies of the U.S. and Taiwan "can enhance peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait." The delegation is expected to be on Taiwan for three days and is part of a larger visit to the Indo-Pacific region. Other members include Rep. John Moolenaar, R-Mich., Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., and Seth Moulton, D-Mass. The delegation will meet with senior Taiwanese leaders and members of civil society to discuss U.S.-Taiwan relations, regional security, trade and other significant issues of mutual interest.

More than $400M needed for western Afghanistan to recover from October earthquake, UN says

ISLAMABAD (AP)—More than $400 million is needed for western Afghanistan to recover and rebuild after a devastating earthquake last October that killed around 2,000 people, the United Nations said Wednesday. The magnitude 6.3 quake on Oct. 7, one of the most destructive in the country's recent history, flattened entire villages in Herat province and also left thousands injured and homeless. Months on, survivors are still struggling to rebuild their lives. In a new U.N. report, released together with the World Bank, the European Union and the Asian Development Bank, estimated there is "an urgent need for $402.9 million to support the critical recovery and reconstruction efforts in the province." The report said recovery strategies should prioritize restoring access to basic services and building earthquake-safe housing, especially for the most affected families. It said its assessment of the urgent needs relied on field data, publicly available information and remote analytics.

Indians living along the border with strife-torn Myanmar protest restrictions on movement

GUWAHATI, India (AP)—Hundreds of people living in a remote northeastern Indian state bordering strife-torn Myanmar on Wednesday protested the Indian government's decision to scrap a limited free border movement between the countries. India and Myanmar until now had allowed people with ethnic links on both sides to travel up to 16 kilometers (10 miles) into each other's territory without travel documents. The protesters in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram state, also rejected New Delhi's decision to erect a fence along the 1,643-kilometer (1,025-mile) India-Myanmar border. "We want the free movement regime to continue because we have families on either side of the India-Myanmar border that was demarcated by the British for their convenience," said Chhuantea, a leader of the Central Young Mizo Association, one of the five civil society organizations that organized the protest. India is home to thousands of refugees from Myanmar. Indian officials in November estimated that thousands had entered northeastern states to flee heavy fighting in Myanmar's western Chin state, where Myanmar's ruling military government has been fighting ethnic rebels.

A farm truck falls into a ravine in the central Philippines killing 14, police say

BACOLOD, Philippines (AP)—A farm truck carrying villagers drove off a cliff in the central Philippines on Wednesday in an accident that left at least 14 passengers dead, police said. Three other people on the truck, including the driver, were seriously injured in the midday accident in Mabinay town in Negros Oriental province, police spokesperson Lt. Stephen Polinar said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the accident, but the driver initially told an investigator that something was wrong with the brakes and he lost control of the truck, which veered off the concrete road and plummeted into a 40-meter- (131-foot) deep ravine, Polinar told The Associated Press by telephone. The mountainous region has experienced heavy rains in the past two days and the road may have been slippery, he said. Most of the passengers were traveling to a village to buy pigs and other farm animals, Polinar said.

China plans to send San Diego Zoo more pandas this year, reigniting its panda diplomacy

SAN DIEGO (AP)—China plans to send a new pair of giant pandas to the San Diego Zoo, renewing its longstanding gesture of friendship toward the United States after nearly all the iconic bears on loan to U.S. zoos were returned as relations began to sour between the two nations. San Diego Zoo officials told The Associated Press that if all permits and other requirements are approved, two bears, a male and a female, are expected to arrive as early as the end of summer, about five years after the zoo sent its last pandas back to China. "We're very excited and hopeful," said Megan Owen of the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and vice president of Wildlife Conservation Science. "They've expressed a tremendous amount of enthusiasm to re-initiate panda cooperation starting with the San Diego Zoo." In November, Chinese President Xi Jinping raised hopes his country would start sending pandas to the U.S. again after he and President Joe Biden convened in Northern California for their first face-to-face meeting in a year and pledged to try to reduce tensions. China is considering a pair that includes a female descendent of Bai Yun and Gao Gao, two of the zoo's former residents, said Owen, an expert in panda behavior who has worked in San Diego and China. Bai Yun, who was born in captivity in China, lived at the zoo for more than 20 years and gave birth to six cubs there. She and her son were the zoo's last pandas and returned to China in 2019. Gao Gao was born in the wild in China and lived at the San Diego Zoo from 2003 to 2018 before being sent back.

World

Navalny's mother files lawsuit

The mother of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has filed a lawsuit at a court in the Arctic city of Salekhard contesting officials' refusal to release her son's body, Russia's state news agency Tass reported Wednesday.

» Demands release of her son's body

A closed-door hearing has been scheduled for March 4, the report said, quoting court officials.

Lyudmila Navalnaya has been trying to retrieve her son's body since Saturday, following his death in a penal colony in Russia's far north a day earlier. She has been unable to find out where his body is being held, Navalny's team reported.

On Wednesday, Navalnaya laid flowers and a picture of her son at a monument dedicated to journalists in Salekhard, close to the prison where Navalny died. Floral tributes that Navalnaya had left a day earlier at the town's memorial to the victims of repression had been cleared away overnight, while several police officers continued to keep watch close to the monument.

Navalnaya appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin Tuesday to release her son's remains so that she could bury him with dignity.

"For the fifth day, I have been unable to see him. They wouldn't release his body to me. And they're not even telling me where he is," a black-clad Navalnaya, 69, said in the video, with the barbed wire of Penal Colony No. 3 in Kharp, about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) northeast of Moscow.

"I'm reaching out to you, Vladimir Putin. The resolution of this matter depends solely on you. Let me finally see my son. I demand that Alexei's body is released immediately, so that I can bury him like a human being," she said in the video, which was posted to social media by Navalny's team.

Russian authorities have said the cause of Navalny's death is still unknown and refused to release his body for the next two weeks as the preliminary inquest continues, members of Navalny's team said.

They accused the government of stalling to try to hide evidence. On Monday, Navalny's widow, Yulia, released a video accusing Putin of killing her husband and alleged the refusal to release his body was part of a cover-up.

"They are cowardly and meanly hiding his body, refusing to give it to his mother and lying miserably," she said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected the allegations of a cover-up, telling reporters that "these are absolutely unfounded, insolent accusations about the head of the Russian state."

Navalny's death has deprived the Russian opposition of its best-known and inspiring politician less than a month before an election that is all but certain to give Putin another six years in power. Many Russians had seen Navalny as a rare hope for political change amid Putin's unrelenting crackdown on the opposition.

Since Navalny's death, about 400 people have been detained across in Russia as they tried to pay tribute to him with flowers and candles, according to OVD-Info, a group that monitors political arrests. Authorities cordoned off some of the memorials to victims of Soviet repression across the country that were being used as sites to leave makeshift tributes to Navalny. Police removed the flowers at night, but more keep appearing. ***(AP)***

Why isn't desperately needed aid reaching Palestinians in Gaza?

From the earliest days of the Israel-Hamas war, the United States and much of the international community have pressed Israel to allow more humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. But as the fighting rages on with no end in sight, the humanitarian catastrophe there has only worsened.

United Nations agencies and aid groups say the ongoing hostilities, the Israeli military's refusal to facilitate deliveries and the breakdown of order inside Gaza make it increasingly difficult to bring vital aid to much of the coastal enclave.

The World Food Program said Tuesday it has paused food deliveries to isolated northern Gaza, where the U.N. children's agency says one in six children are acutely malnourished. A U.N. report in December found that a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million people are starving.

"You find that there are people who have missed meals for a day or two days or three days—they have severe hunger," Matthew Hollingworth, country director for WFP, said Wednesday. "But you also have people who have acute hunger, that is, they are not eating for a week."

Hollingworth described the halt as a "temporary pause" and said the WFP was talking to "all the parties" to resume aid shipments. "We have to flood the area with assistance, if we're going to mitigate and stop a famine," he said.

Footage from Gaza in recent weeks has shown scenes of chaotic desperation with hundreds of people surrounding trucks and emptying them. Some Palestinians say they have resorted to making bread out of animal fodder. New mothers say baby formula is hard to come by or unaffordable. ***(AP)***

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AMENDED REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICES

SAIPAN HARBOR DREDGING PROJECT
PORT OF SAIPAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-002-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design and Planning Services for the Saipan Harbor Dredging Project at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-002-24.

The project is being funded by the U.S. Maritime Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office, by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, February 16, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their professional qualification statements, no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: February 7, 2024

UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 4th Quarter General Membership Meeting on March 5, 2024 from 9:30am to 12:30pm at Saipan World Resort – Sunflower Room

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review & Adoption of the Agenda of March 5, 2024
IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2023

V. Action Items
  a. Review & Approve the DD Basic Grant Partial Award Budget
  b. Review & Approve the CNMI Assistive Technology Grant Partial Award Budget

VI. Reports
  a. Chairperson
  b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
  c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
  d. Executive Director

VII. Old Business
  a. Family Transition Symposium Update
  b. Fundamentals of Caregiving Training Update
  c. American Sign Language Training Update
  d. March 2024 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Update

VIII. New Business
  a. AS UCEDD Technical Assistance – February 22, 2024

IX. Miscellaneous
X. Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Concepcion Ulloa
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total $274,744 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-24-013
PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW GENSET UNITS FOR SAIPAN, POWER PLANT NO.4

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Contractors or Vendors for the purchase and installation of new gensets for Power Plant No.4 located on the island of Saipan. The purchase and installation of the new gensets with approximately 6MW of total new output will improve CUC current power generation capacity needed to sustain critical electrical services to the community of Saipan.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration with CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package will be emailed to the registered email ID. Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division by March 8, 2024 to be considered.

A Pre-proposal Conference followed by site visits will be held on **February 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RFP-24-013, Purchase and Installation of New Genset Units for Saipan Power Plant No.4"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 A.M.(ChST) on March 19, 2024.** Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes which will become the obligation of the proposer awarded a contract.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 27, 2024,** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Off The Wall

CBP dog sniffs out mummified monkeys in passenger luggage

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION VIA AP

This undated photo shows the mummified remains of four monkeys discovered and seized from luggage from a traveler who'd been to the Democratic Republic of Congo before arriving at Boston Logan Airport.

BOSTON (AP)—A U.S. Customs and Border Protection dog sniffed out something unusual in luggage from a traveler returning from Africa—mummified monkeys.

The passenger returning from a visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo reported that the luggage contained dried fish, but an inspection at Boston Logan Airport revealed dead and dehydrated bodies of four monkeys, agents said. The traveler said he brought the monkeys into the U.S. for his own consumption, Ryan Bissette, a CPB spokesperson, said Sunday.

Raw or minimally processed meat from wild animals, sometimes referred to as "bushmeat," is banned in the U.S. because of the threat of disease.

"The potential dangers posed by bringing bushmeat into the United States are real. Bushmeat can carry germs that can cause illness, including the Ebola virus," said Julio Caravia, local port director for Customs and Border Protection.

The incident happened last month but was made public on Friday.

Bissette said Sunday that no charges were filed but all of the luggage was seized and the nearly 9 pounds (4 kilograms) of bushmeat were marked for destruction by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Caught at border with pythons in his pants, NYC man fined and sentenced to probation

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—A New York City man who admitted to smuggling three Burmese pythons in his pants through a U.S.-Canadian border crossing was sentenced Wednesday to a year of probation and fined $5,000, federal prosecutors said.

Calvin Bautista, 38, crossed into northern New York with the hidden snakes on a bus from Montreal to New York City on July 15, 2018. The young adult snakes were hidden in the inner thigh of his pants in snake bags tied to the pants' drawstring.

They were discovered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers, according to court documents and a release from the office of U.S. Attorney Carla B. Freedman.

The Queens resident purchased the snakes, which were worth more than $2,500, at a reptile store in Canada, according to court documents.

Importation of Burmese pythons is regulated by an international treaty and by U.S. federal regulations listing them as "injurious to human beings."

The Burmese python, one of the world's largest snakes, is considered a vulnerable species in its native Asia and is invasive in Florida, where it threatens native animals.

Bautista's attorney had no comment.

Oklahoma judge who sent more than 500 texts during murder trial resigns

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—An Oklahoma judge agreed to step down Friday after she was caught sending hundreds of texts from the bench while overseeing a murder trial in the killing of a 2-year-old boy, including messages that mocked prosecutors and were sprinkled with emojis.

District Judge Traci Soderstrom also agreed to not seek judicial office again in Oklahoma under a proposed settlement agreement filed with the Oklahoma Court on the Judiciary. She had faced removal from the bench over accusations that included gross neglect of duty, oppression in office, lack of proper temperament and failure to supervise her office.

Soderstrom had been scheduled to go on trial in a special court starting Monday.

"I promised to uphold the Constitution in a fair, even-handed and efficient manner," Soderstrom said in a resignation letter given to local media. "I believe that I have done so. However, being human, I have also faltered."

Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice John Kane IV recommended Soderstrom be removed following an investigation that found she mocked prosecutors, laughed at the bailiff's comment about a prosecutor's genitals, praised the defense attorney and called the prosecutor's key witness a liar during the murder trial of Khristian Tyler Martzall.

Security video published by The Oklahoman showed Soderstrom texting or messaging for minutes at a time during jury selection, opening statements and testimony during the trial in Chandler, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) outside of Oklahoma City.

Science & Technology

Old European satellite plunges into the Pacific

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—An old Earth-observing satellite fell out of orbit Wednesday and harmlessly broke apart over the Pacific.

The European Remote Sensing 2 satellite reentered halfway between Hawaii and Alaska. The European Space Agency confirmed the demise of the 5,000-pound (2,300-kilogram) spacecraft, known as ERS-2.

No damage or injuries were reported. Experts had expected most of the satellite to burn up.

Launched in 1995, the spacecraft was retired in 2011. Flight controllers quickly lowered its orbit to avoid hitting other satellites, using up all the fuel, and natural orbital decay took care of the rest. Its entry was uncontrolled, and so the precise location could not be predicted.

"Gone, but not forgotten," ESA said on X, formerly Twitter. "ERS-2 left a remarkable legacy of data that still continue to advance science."

Its predecessor, ERS-1, which failed and stopped working decades ago, remains in orbit.

ESA VIA AP

This photo provided by the European Space Agency shows the European Remote Sensing 2 satellite in a clean room before its launch in 1995.

Astronomers find what may be universe's brightest object that devours one sun a day

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—Astronomers have discovered what may be the brightest object in the universe, a quasar with a black hole at its heart growing so fast that it swallows the equivalent of a sun a day.

The record-breaking quasar shines 500 trillion times brighter than our sun. The black hole powering this distant quasar is more than 17 billion times more immense than our sun, an Australian-led team reported Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

While the quasar resembles a mere dot in images, scientists envision a ferocious place.

The rotating disk around the quasar's black hole—the luminous swirling gas and other matter from gobbled-up stars—is like a cosmic hurricane.

"This quasar is the most violent place that we know in the universe," lead author Christian Wolf of Australian National University said in an email.

The European Southern Observatory spotted the object, J0529-4351, during a 1980 sky survey, but it was thought to be a star. It was not identified as a quasar—the extremely active and luminous core of a galaxy—until last year. Observations by telescopes in Australia and Chile's Atacama Desert clinched it.

"The exciting thing about this quasar is that it was hiding in plain sight and was misclassified as a star previously," Yale University's Priyamvada Natarajan, who was not involved in the study, said in an email.

How do whales sing? Experiments hint their voice boxes have a unique feature

LONDON (AP)—Whales sing loud enough that their songs travel through the ocean, but knowing the mechanics behind that has been a mystery.

Scientists now think they have an idea, and it's something not seen in other animals: a specialized voice box.

Experts say the discovery, while based on a study that is too tiny to be definitive, will direct future research into how whales communicate.

In a paper published Wednesday in the journal Nature, Coen Elemans of the University of Southern Denmark and colleagues studied the voice boxes, or larynxes, from three dead, stranded whales—a humpback, minke and sei, which are all types of baleen whales.

In the laboratory, the scientists blew air through the voice boxes under controlled conditions to see what tissues might vibrate. Researchers also created computer models of the sei whale's vocalizations and matched them to recordings of similar whales taken in the wild.

Whales' ancestors were land-dwellers about 50 million years ago before moving into water. Elemans said the animals adapted their voice boxes over tens of millions of years to make sounds underwater.

Unlike humans and other mammals, baleen whales don't have teeth or vocal chords. Instead, in their voice boxes, they have a U-shaped tissue that allows them to breathe in massive amounts of air and a large "cushion" of fat and muscle not seen in other animal species. Whales sing by pushing the tissue against the fat and muscle cushion, Elemans said.

Life & Style

Pablo Neruda's death in 1973 should be reinvestigated, court rules

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—The death of Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda days after Chile's 1973 military coup should be reinvestigated, an appeals court ruled Tuesday, saying new steps could help clarify what killed the poet.

Last December, a judge rejected a request by Neruda's nephew to reopen the case to look for causes other than cancer, which was listed on his death certificate. The nephew, Rodolfo Reyes, said forensic experts from Canada, Denmark and Chile had found evidence pointing to Neruda being poisoned.

Reyes said forensic tests carried out in Danish and Canadian labs indicated Neruda's body had "a great quantity of Cloristridium botulinum, which is incompatible with human life." The toxin can cause nervous system paralysis and death.

The ruling was the latest turn in one of the great debates of post-coup Chile. The long-stated official position has been that Neruda died of complications from prostate cancer, but his driver argued for decades that he was poisoned.

Neruda

In December, a judge ruled that the forensic results had already been carried out or were "late," and didn't lead anywhere.

Several years earlier, other international forensics experts had already rejected the official cause of death as cachexia, or weakness and wasting of the body due to chronic illness—in his case, cancer. But at that time they said they had not determined what did kill Neruda.

On Tuesday, the appeals court in Santiago unanimously revoked the judge's resolution and ordered that the procedures requested by the nephew be done. These steps include a calligraphic analysis of the death certificate, a meta-analysis of the test results carried out by foreign agencies, and subpoenas for statements from Chile's documentation project and an expert on Clostridium botulinum.

Neruda was best known for his love poems and accumulated dozens of prizes, including the 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature.

He was also a Communist Party member and friend of Chile's President Salvador Allende, whose government was toppled in the coup that put Gen. Augusto Pinochet in power. Allende killed himself rather than surrender.

Neruda was traumatized by the military takeover and the persecution and killing of his friends. He planned to go into exile in Mexico, where he would have been an influential voice against the dictatorship.

But a day before his planned departure, he was taken by ambulance to a clinic in Santiago, where he died Sept. 23, 1973.

Netflix revives fantasy epic 'Avatar: The Last Airbender'

NEW YORK (AP)—A new entry in the "Avatar" franchise is about to soar and James Cameron has no part in it.

"Avatar: The Last Airbender" is a completely different fictional world from Cameron's Pandora but the two similarly named dueling sci-fi fantasy properties have kept throwing out new entries over the decades.

On Thursday—two years after the debut of "Avatar: The Way of Water"—Netflix offers "Avatar: The Last Airbender," a multi-part, lush live-action adaptation that mixes adventure and friendship, martial arts and philosophy, all through an Asian lens.

ROBERT FALCONER

This image released by Netflix shows Gordon Cormier in a scene from the series "Avatar: The Last Airbender."

It's a potentially fraught step because fans of this universe are very protective of the franchise, which began as a beloved cartoon series in the anime style airing on Nickelodeon from 2005 to 2008.

"When you have an opportunity to be part of a world that is beloved by generations of people, it can be daunting sometimes because it's a big responsibility," says actor Paul Sun-Hyung Lee. "But, at the same time, as performers, you don't often get chances to sort of dive into worlds like that and to be part of gigantic productions."

"Avatar: The Last Airbender" is centered on a world with four tribes—air, water, earth and fire. Some can manipulate or "bend" their respective elements: hurl giant blobs of water, raise up rocks or zap someone with a wave of flames.

The eight-part saga starts with this world unbalanced—there has been a war for nearly 100 years as the Fire Nation tries to take over the planet, pretty much wiping out the airbenders along the way.

Then a young waterbender named Katara and her older brother, Sokka, discover a 12-year-old airbender named Aang, who has been frozen for a century. They realize that he may be the prophesied Avatar who can control all four elements and unite all four nations.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Kevin Costner and Christine Baumgartner's divorce is finalized, officially ending their marriage

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP)—A judge has declared that Kevin Costner and his wife of nearly two decades, Christine Baumgartner, are now legally divorced, according to court records filed Tuesday. The couple's marriage ended, and both became single, on Friday, nine months after she filed for divorce, a judgment entered in Santa Barbara County court showed. In the first months after their split, Costner And Baumgartner fought in court over child custody and support payments and appeared to be headed for a contentious trial. But they reached a settlement agreement in September that allowed them to avoid it. The two will have joint custody of their sons, ages 16 and 15, and daughter, age 13. A judge in September ordered Costner to pay about $63,000 per month in child support, after she had sought about $175,000 per month. Costner, 69, and Baumgartner, 48, a model and handbag designer, began dating in 1998 and married at his Colorado ranch in 2004. It was the second marriage for Costner, the Oscar and Emmy winning star of TV's " Yellowstone " and films including "Dances With Wolves," "The Bodyguard" and "Bull Durham." He also has four adult children from previous relationships.

Beyoncé becomes first Black woman to claim top spot on Billboard's country music chart

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Beyoncé made history once again: The superstar singer has become the first Black woman to top Billboard's country music chart. The Grammy winner achieved the feat after her new single "Texas Hold 'Em" reached No. 1 on the country airplay chart this week. She dropped the song on Feb. 11—during the Super Bowl—along with her other single "16 Carriages," which debuted at No. 9 on the same chart. Both songs are expected to be featured on Beyoncé's upcoming, country-themed album, which is referred to as "act ii," on March 29. It's a follow-up offering to her 2022 album "Renaissance," which is frequently referred to as "Act I: Renaissance." Beyoncé announced the full-length new album after a Verizon commercial she starred in aired during the Super Bowl this month. Beyoncé is also the first woman to claim the top spot on the Hot Country Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs charts since both began in 1958, according to Billboard. The only other acts who have topped both include Justin Bieber, Billy Ray Cyrus and Ray Charles.

Medical condition leads to breakup of 20-year marriage

DEAR ABBY: I suffered an injury that caused internal bleeding, which then gave me iron deficiency anemia. I was battling its symptoms of depression and anxiety before I was diagnosed. Never having had any mental health struggles in my life, I had no idea what was happening to me. I was happy and calm my whole life until this medical condition changed my behavior considerably.

My wife of 20 years left me. I was diagnosed with the iron deficiency anemia after she had left. After the diagnosis, I was able to stop my blood loss and cure the anemia. Its symptoms went away, and I returned to my normal self.

I was sure my wife and I would reconcile after my diagnosis, but she says I was using the illness as an excuse for my behavior. She doesn't understand it was the cause. She mistakenly believes I am permanently mentally ill. She doesn't understand that these symptoms went away once the illness was cured. She says it brought out my true personality, which is not true.

My wife and family are my whole life. I didn't get this medical condition on purpose. We have a 4-year-old daughter I am a great father to. My wife is throwing away our family and trying to take my daughter away from me because I had a curable illness, which I no longer have. How can I get her to understand what happened and save our family?

SADDEST MAN IN THE WORLD

DEAR SADDEST MAN: You can't force your wife to reconcile, but it would be beneficial to both of you to consult your physician so he or she can explain the reason for your personality change and assure her the problem is not permanent. If that doesn't help, then you will have to accept that the marriage is over for the most tragic of reasons and go on with your life. I am so sorry for your predicament.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My husband died two years ago. It has been a struggle, but we are making it. I have two sons. One is on his own; the other is in middle school. I want to move back to my hometown, but my son wants to stay here with his friends and go to the local high school like his brother did. I don't have anything holding me here besides my job.

I am so sad and depressed. Moving back home with friends and family closer would be better for me but maybe not better for him. Losing his dad has been really hard on him. It will be four years before he finishes school. I just want to be a good mom. Please advise me.

NOT SURE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR NOT SURE: Do not move your son while he is in his last year or two at the middle school. By then, cliques have formed, and he may find it difficult to fit in at the new school. The time to make that move would be the summer before your son's freshman year of high school, because at that time every student will be entering a new environment and be on more equal footing socially. It couldn't hurt to discuss this with a counselor at your son's school and ask for suggestions.

■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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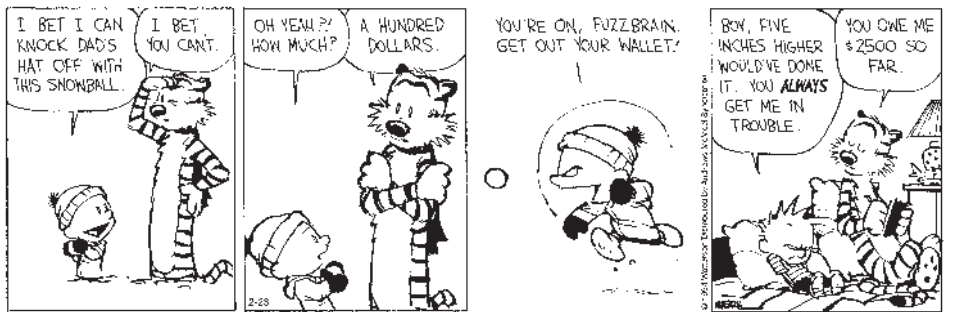
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

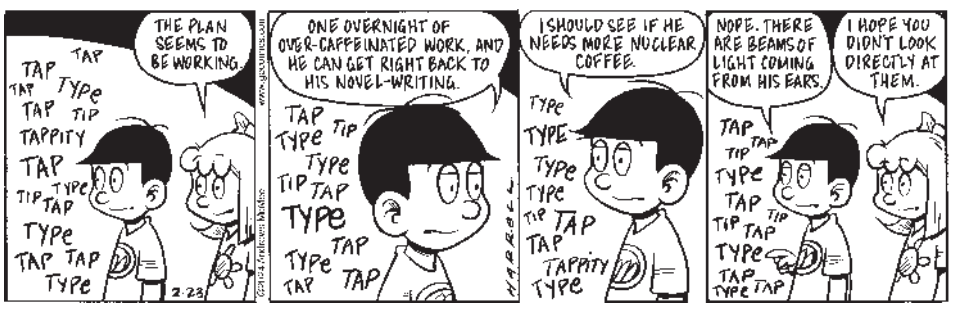

I BET I CAN KNOCK DAD'S HAT OFF WITH THIS SNOWBALL.
I BET YOU CAN'T.
OH YEAH? HOW MUCH?
A HUNDRED DOLLARS.
YOU'RE ON, FUZZBRAIN. GET OUT YOUR WALLET!
BOY, FIVE INCHES HIGHER WOULD'VE DONE IT. YOU ALWAYS GET ME IN TROUBLE.
YOU OWE ME $2500 SO FAR.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


THE PLAN SEEMS TO BE WORKING.
ONE OVERNIGHT OF OVER-CAFFEINATED WORK, AND HE CAN GET RIGHT BACK TO HIS NOVEL-WRITING.
I SHOULD SEE IF HE NEEDS MORE NUCLEAR COFFEE.
NOPE. THERE ARE BEAMS OF LIGHT COMING FROM HIS EARS.
I HOPE YOU DIDN'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT THEM.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

DARYL, HOW COULD YOU CHEAT ON ME WITH MY SISTER?
EASY. SHE OWNS A PORK RINDS BUSINESS AND LOVES GOLF.
I'M FINE WITH THAT.
YOU ARE WATCHING THE MEN'S LIFETIME MOVIE CHANNEL.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Ozone, for one
4 Black, in verse
8 Voice in an iPhone
12 Mel of baseball
13 Traditional tales
14 Eye part
15 Tapered cigar
17 Algeria's neighbor
18 Gymnast Korbut
19 Fork prongs
20 "Roots" author
22 Shadow
24 "Legally Blonde" role
25 Discern
29 One of the Stooges
30 Paper packs
31 Diarist Anais
32 Works on stage
34 Roman 301
35 Piece of work
36 Murmured romantically
37 Tint
40 Baby carriage
41 "Dragnet" org.
42 Bleaching agent
46 Gaelic
47 Old Testament book
48 Petty peeve
49 Woodland grazer
50 Tousle
51 Dean's list stat

DOWN

1 Republicans
2 Noshed
3 Baby carriage
4 Melancholy verse
5 — Raton
6 Scrap
7 "The Matrix" hero
8 "Good as new," for one
9 Tehran's country
10 Anger
11 Egyptian deity
16 Run off
19 Twitches
20 Rope fiber
21 Hand lotion ingredient
22 Squads
23 Weaponry
25 Lima's land
26 Arriving
27 Bad habit
28 Author Bagnold
30 Lariat
33 Chow for a cow
34 Cajole
36 Angry
37 "Citizen Kane" prop
38 Tortoise's opponent
39 Church section
40 Experts
42 Grier of "The L Word"
43 Flightless bird
44 Quick swim
45 Greek H

Solution time: 25 mins.

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			Y	O	U	R	F	R	I	G	H	T
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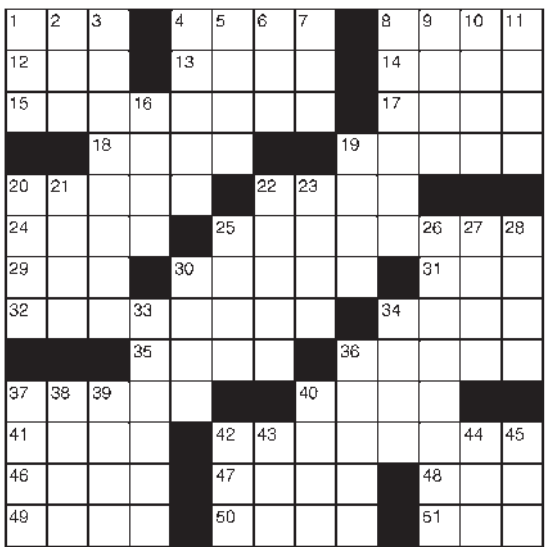
Yesterday's answer 2-23



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dakota Fanning, 30; Josh Gad, 43; Kristin Davis, 59; Patricia Richardson, 73.

Happy Birthday: Get moving. Don't wait until someone backs you into a corner. Take steps that help you initiate the changes you want instead of being forced into something that falls short of your expectations. Take progressive action and be the one who decides what's next for you. Use your imagination and discipline to put your energy into fulfilling your ambitions. Choose to flourish instead of surrendering to temptation or indulgent behavior. Your numbers are 4, 9, 16, 27, 30, 34, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* A change may not be what you want, but it will motivate you to be receptive to new beginnings. It's time to discover how much you have to offer. Put your talents and skills to work and do something worthwhile. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Get involved in something that matters to you, and make a difference. Sharing your ideas will motivate others to pitch in and help. Take a leadership position, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Delegate work to ensure you oversee, not overdo. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't take anything or anyone for granted. If you want something done, do it yourself. Watch out for scammers, hidden costs and risky situations. Focus on getting fit, staying healthy and learning something to help you get ahead. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* A reunion will be eye-opening. Listening and offering sound advice will give you leverage when you need something in return. Avoid overspending or letting anyone take advantage of your kindness and generosity. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Preparation will prohibit you from taking on too much. Protect your health by watching how much you eat, drink or spend. Personal gain and growth are apparent if you are open about how you feel and what you want. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Open your mind to new experiences and discover what life offers. The options will help you find cheaper, more efficient alternatives to your current lifestyle. A forthright attitude will help you gather more information than you reveal. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* A motivational experience will help you decide what to do next. Becoming more self-aware will promote decisions and help you recognize who your people are and the benefits and pitfalls of associating with the right or wrong individuals. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Less conversation and more action is favored. Let your work speak for you and the changes you enforce set the standard for what's coming next. Use your imagination and apply what you discover at home, work and when dealing with others. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take care of money matters and distance yourself from joint ventures and shared expenses. Refuse to let anyone lead you in a direction that's costly or not geared to get you where you want to go. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Waiting for someone to make the first move won't solve problems. Don't put up with something that no longer works for you. Consider what matters and brings you joy, and incorporate those factors into your life. It's up to you to improve your life. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Don't avoid controversy. Stand up for your rights by offering alternatives. You may not convince everyone to see things your way, but once you know who is with you and who isn't, it will be easier to move forward without trepidation. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Initiate what you want, regardless of what others do or say. You will be liable for emotional and financial decisions, making it essential to do your due diligence before moving. Choose a minimalist attitude when dealing with temptation and those asking for too much. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are elaborate, compassionate and fanciful. You are spontaneous and persuasive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1					6		4	9
		9					6	
8					1			
		4	7		2			8
		2		9			7	
		7		5		6		4
						4		
9					3	2		
	3		8			7		

Difficulty: ★★★★ 2/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	5	9	8	7	1	3	4	2
7	3	8	2	6	4	1	5	9
1	4	2	5	9	3	8	7	6
2	6	4	3	1	8	7	9	5
8	7	5	9	2	6	4	1	3
9	1	3	7	4	5	2	6	8
3	8	6	1	5	7	9	2	4
4	9	1	6	3	2	5	8	7
5	2	7	4	8	9	6	3	1

Difficulty: ★★★ 2/22

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

TOM SMOTHERS (1937-2023) **Solution: 8 letters**

S	S	E	M	E	C	I	N	R	E	H	T	O	N	A
T	T	M	S	L	A	I	C	R	E	M	M	O	C	C
N	E	U	U	R	A	T	I	U	G	E	Y	T	O	O
E	P	S	E	I	G	G	A	M	D	E	O	H	R	U
M	H	I	E	M	M	Y	B	I	L	R	O	U	E	S
E	A	C	Z	O	N	E	O	I	H	S	D	N	M	T
S	N	I	D	S	N	C	R	R	T	P	E	I	I	I
R	I	A	U	N	R	O	S	P	U	E	R	C	C	C
O	E	N	O	E	C	O	M	A	R	E	A	Y	K	O
D	G	R	F	H	T	G	B	A	N	D	L	C	R	M
N	M	R	E	E	O	O	D	E	E	J	O	L	I	E
E	E	L	E	D	L	T	H	R	N	R	O	I	D	D
D	L	H	T	Y	C	R	A	M	I	S	D	S	G	Y
E	C	O	N	A	M	O	Y	O	Y	H	O	T	E	E
T	H	E	I	N	F	O	R	M	A	N	T	N	R	S

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Acoustic, Actor, Another Nice Mess, Benson, Bolyn, Cheetos, Co-host, Comedy, Commercials, Dream On, Duo, Emmy, Endorsements, Gnus, Guitar, Hot Dog, Laredo, Maggie, Marcy, Mediocre Fred, Musician, Norm, Premium, Remick Ridge, Riley, Rochelle, Ruth, San Jose, Speed, Stephanie, The Informant, Third, Unicyclist, Yo-Yo Man, Zone

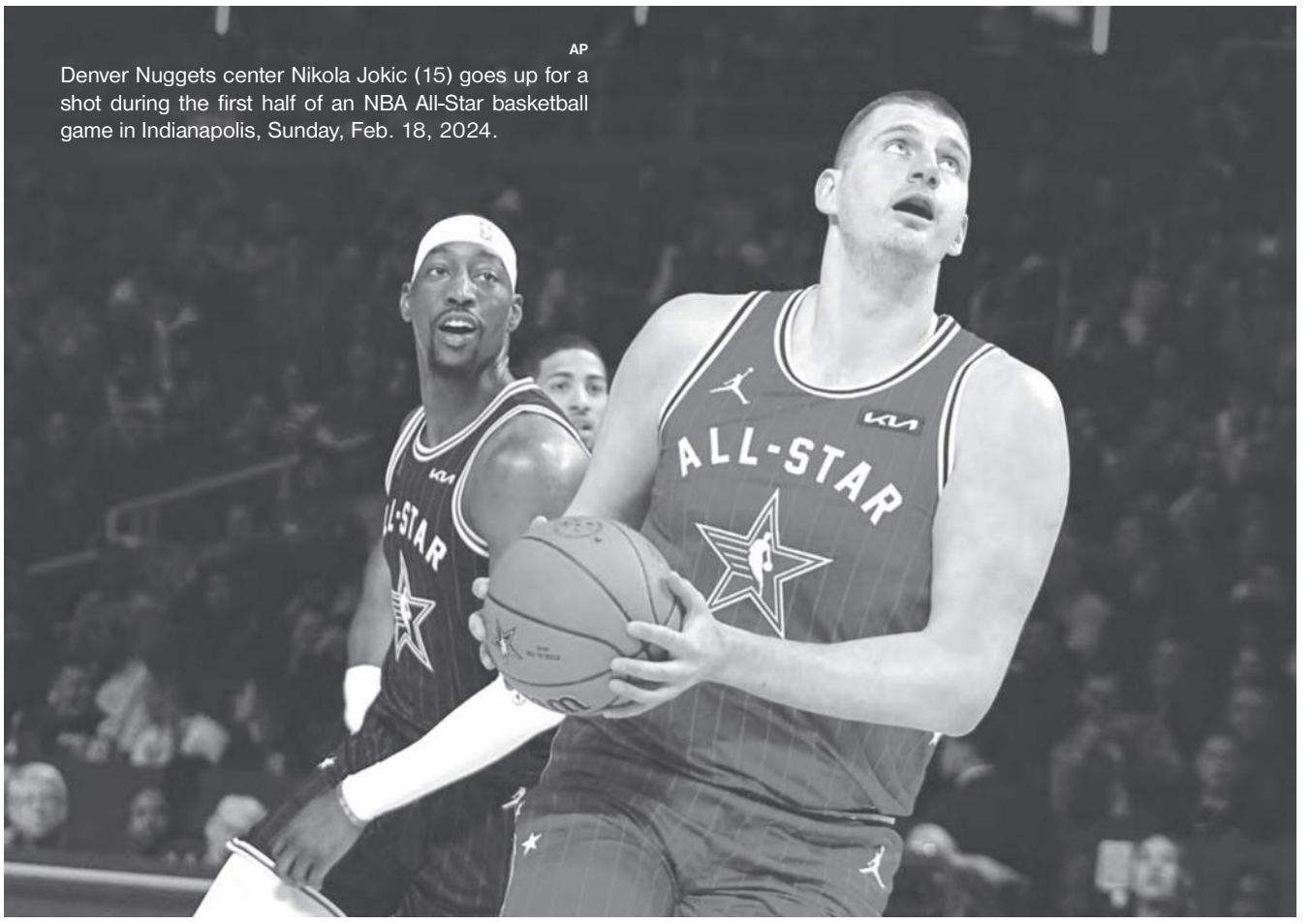
Yesterday's Answer: Boarding

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1** can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

The stretch run of the NBA season has arrived

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

» It's time for the playoff push



AP
Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) goes up for a shot during the first half of an NBA All-Star basketball game in Indianapolis, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024.

LeBron James being out Thursday night.

There's no NBA player who is a bigger fan of harness racing than Denver's Nikola Jokic. He owns horses, goes to tracks whenever he can and even accepted one of his MVP awards while riding around at his farm in Serbia.

He knows the stretch run often decides races.

And the same holds true in the NBA, which is entering its stretch run.

The All-Star break is over, games resume on Thursday and the defending champion Nuggets—along with a slew of other contenders—are hoping that this is the time when they can start hitting their best stride. Denver is coming out of the break in fourth place in the Western Conference, three games back of No. 1 Minnesota.

"We don't try to listen to what people say," Jokic said. "We know what we are capable of. And it's working for us. So, I don't know what people are saying, that we are not good. I don't say that we are the best, but we are not bad."

They were the best last season. This season, the best won't be crowned until June, of course. The next couple of months are all about jostling for playoff position—or in some cases, fighting for playoff spots.

It's not the second half—what people commonly call the period after the All-Star break—but rather the final third of the season. The league is exactly two-thirds of the way through the season, 820 games down, 410 games to go. It's the time of year when playbooks tend to get tweaked a little and things get a little more serious.

Paul George of the Los Angeles Clippers knows the playoff push is underway. But as a veteran, he also knows that the most important game is always the next one.

"Can't look too far ahead," George said. "Take it one game at a time. Because that's what you tend to do, second half of the season, start to look ahead and look forward to playoffs and just trying to get to the playoffs. But we just got to take it one game at a time."

Boston has the NBA's best record and sits high atop the Eastern Conference, Minnesota and Oklahoma City—a pair of surprises—are first and second, respectively, in the West and some teams with championship pedigrees like Golden State and the Los Angeles Lakers are hoping their pre-All-Star momentum carries over now.

The Warriors were 8-2 in their last 10 games before the break, the Lakers 7-3.

"The most important thing for me is definitely my health, where I'm at right now, where our team is leaning," Lakers forward LeBron James said. "We're trending in the right direction. Obviously, with our Laker team, it's been about health all year. Trying to do what's best for me for the betterment of the team."

He's been dealing with an ankle issue that limited him in the All-Star Game and will keep him out of Thursday's game against Golden State, the Lakers said. Other teams have far bigger concerns—primarily the Philadelphia 76ers, who spent a bit of time in November atop the East but have dropped nine of their last 12 games with reigning MVP Joel Embiid out with a knee injury.

They're sliding and so are the Milwaukee Bucks, who have gone 3-7 since Doc Rivers took over as coach. Rivers said at All-Star weekend that he knew that taking over a team just before a long road trip would be a mistake; it seems like he was right. But he also believes there's time to figure things out.

"If you look statistically over the last 20 years, the same teams win it: the teams that are in the top five or 10 in offense and the teams that are in the top five or 10 in defense," Rivers said. "That's not going away. So you can score all you want. But you better be able to defend, too, if you want to win."

Boston has a six-game lead over second-place Cleveland in the East; that would suggest it's safe to go ahead and put the Celtics down for a 10th consecutive playoff berth, extending the longest current streak of postseason appearances in the league.

Detroit, Washington, Charlotte, San Antonio, Portland and Memphis all are alive mathematically but not realistically. Take them out of the mix, and it's 24 teams left in the race for 20 spots when including the play-in tournament.

The Thunder had 100-1 odds to win the NBA title when the season started. They're at 25-1 now, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"I think we're starting to kind of see others take notice of us," Thunder guard and MVP candidate Shai Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We knew that was going to happen once we started winning games. It comes with the territory."

Every team has between 26 and 29 games left to play. In terms of combined remaining opponent winning percentage, Orlando, Miami and Boston are among the teams with the easiest—on paper, anyway—schedules the rest of the way. Phoenix would have the toughest, including two games left to play against Boston and a 10-game stretch to end the season all against likely playoff teams.

"We respect every team regardless and try to focus on us as much as possible each night," Suns forward Kevin Durant said. "It just about building our habits, getting better at what we've already established and pushing forward. I think playing against some of the teams that's going to be there at the end of the season, it's going to be a great test before we head to the playoffs."

Amid wide-open playoff race, wide-open MVP race might be brewing as well

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The new rule that rendered Philadelphia's Joel Embiid ineligible for a second consecutive NBA MVP award because he's missing too many games has the potential to create something the league hasn't seen in almost two decades.

That would be a wide-open MVP race.

Steve Nash won the MVP award for the 2005-06 season with only 46% of the first-place votes, marking the last time somebody won the NBA's top individual honor without having his name atop more than half of the ballots.

The winner in every season since has gotten at least 50% of the first-place votes—and Stephen Curry even got 100% when he was MVP in 2016. This year sure seems like it could go differently, with several players in the realistic mix coming out of the All-Star break.

"There's a lot of guys," Boston forward Jaylen Brown said. "Who knows what the actual criteria is, to how it goes. I've had questions about a lot of different things that goes into stuff. But, you know, I guess we'll see."

Denver's Nikola Jokic certainly could end up with the award for the third time in four years. Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo may be in the mix for his third MVP as well. Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was fifth last season and should be higher this year. Dallas' Luka Doncic will likely be on plenty of ballots. If the Los Angeles Clippers keep playing the way they have been over the last couple months, don't be surprised if a case gets made for Kawhi Leonard.

"Kawhi should definitely be in that conversation," Clippers forward Paul George said. "But there's a lot of guys. You talk about Shai, you talk about Luka, you talk about Jokic. There's a lot of guys out West and even out East, there's a lot of guys doing a hell of a job representing their team."

Brown believes his Celtics teammate Jayson Tatum should be atop the MVP list. It's a reasonable argument; Tatum is the best player on the team with the best record in the league and his averages of 27 points, nearly nine rebounds and nearly five assists per game certainly merit award consideration. A player has finished a season with those averages 26 times over the years; of those, nine have won that season's MVP award.

Except this season, there are at least two other players—Doncic and Antetokoumpo—averaging that many points, rebounds and assists. Embiid was as well before he got hurt; it's unclear when or if he'll be back, but even if he does return he won't be eligible for the MVP and probably won't meet the threshold to rank among statistical leaders, either.

Part of the challenge of selecting an MVP is this: There's no absolute definition. To some, it might mean "best player." To others, it might mean "most valuable to his team." And if that's the case, it might be time to look at Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell.

The Cavs are an NBA-best 23-5 since mid-December. They're currently No. 2 in the Eastern Conference, when probably very few thought they'd be there. Mitchell is averaging 28.4 points, 6.3 assists, 5.4 rebounds and 1.9 steals—all career-highs.

He wants to be MVP. He knows he doesn't get mentioned. He can't figure out why.

"I feel like the work shows for itself. I'm not one to go out there and vocalize," Mitchell said. "Just want to go out there and do it. Ultimately, it's not up to me. At the end of the day, they don't put my name in there. They don't want to. I'm just going to continue to play the level I'm playing at."

Gilgeous-Alexander is leading another surprise story in Oklahoma City. The Thunder haven't won a playoff series since 2016; right now, they're No. 2 in the West thanks in large part to the Canadian guard with averages of 31.1 points, 6.5 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 2.2 steals per game.

The only person to finish a season with all those averages: Michael Jordan, who did it 1988-89—but didn't win MVP that season. Go figure.

"He is more in the MVP race, I think, than people realize," Orlando coach Jamahl Mosley said of Gilgeous-Alexander. "I mean, this is something special."

Gilgeous-Alexander said he's just going to keep blocking out any noise about awards or playoffs or anything besides who the Thunder play next.

"For me, it's not any more difficult," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "I think I've learned through experience—and obviously as a young kid it's easy to get caught up in it, just going back to high school and rankings and things like that. I've just found so much success from, not blocking it out, but not letting it faze me or control me."

So, there's a playoff race. There's also an MVP race. Often by this time, it's pretty easy to say that this guy or that guy will win. That's not the case right now, and it only might get more muddled the rest of the way.

Which would be a great thing.

Mets' Senga dealing with some arm fatigue after throwing at spring training

By JAY COHEN
AP BASEBALL WRITER

after throwing a side session during spring training.

Mets manager Carlos Mendoza said Wednesday that Senga was being examined by the team's trainers. Mendoza wasn't sure if the Japanese pitcher would have an MRI.

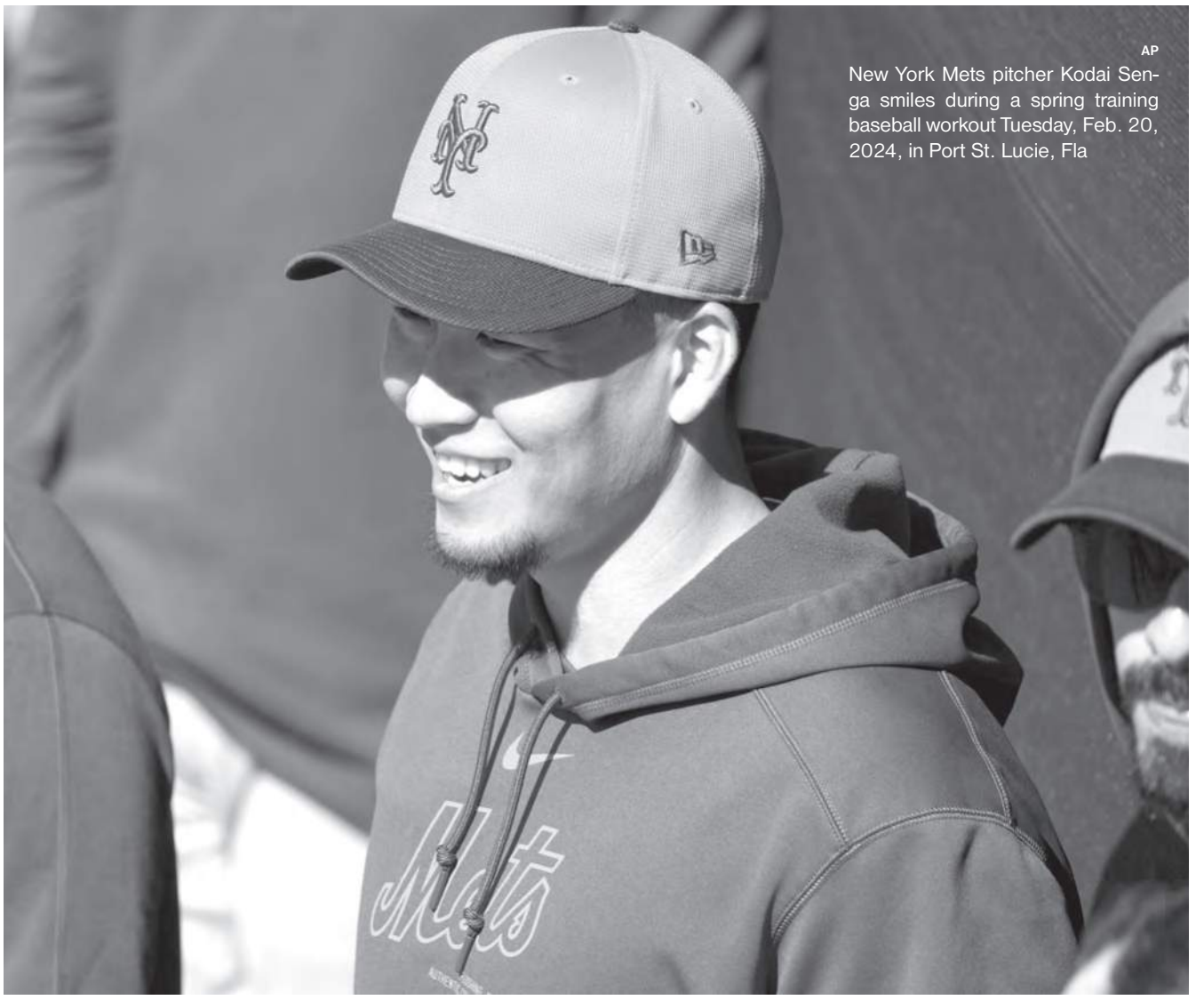
"We'll see. We've got to get with the trainers because that was late, obviously," Mendoza told reporters in Port St. Lucie, Florida. "I've got to get more information. But he got on the mound yesterday and today he came in and just overall arm fatigue."

New York is looking to Senga to help anchor its rotation after he put together an impressive rookie season. The Mets signed right-hander Luis Severino and left-hander Sean Manaea in the offseason, and they acquired right-hander Adrian Houser in a December trade with Milwaukee.

The 31-year-old Senga signed a $75 million, five-year contract with New York in December 2022. He went 12-7 with a 2.98 ERA in 29 starts last year.

The Mets are hoping to rebound after they finished fourth in the NL East with a 75-87 record. David Stearns took over as president of baseball operations in September, and Mendoza was hired in November.

New York also announced Wednesday that it had agreed to a minor league contract with Ji Man Choi. The veteran first baseman played for Pittsburgh and San Diego last year, batting .163 with six homers and 13 RBIs in 39 games.



AP
New York Mets pitcher Kodai Senga smiles during a spring training baseball workout Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, in Port St. Lucie, Fla

INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR

It looks as if the Los Angeles Dodgers are making the most of their international roster.

In a video posted by the Dodgers on social media on Wednesday, outfielder Teoscar Hernández is giving a Spanish lesson to new teammates Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto.

Ohtani offers a near-perfect "Buenos días fanáticos"—Good morning, fans—and then laughs and smiles. Hernández then goes to Yamamoto, and he says "Buenos días."

Hernández, Ohtani and Yamamoto are entering their first season with LA. Hernández finalized a $23.5 million, one-year contract in January. Ohtani joined the Dodgers on a $700 million, 10-year deal, and Yamamoto received a $325 million, 12-year contract.

Ohtani wants to get 50 at-bats during spring training—counting live batting practice and swings off a pitching machine—to prepare for the regular season, and he thinks he has plenty of time to fit them in. The Dodgers play the San Diego Padres on March 20 in Seoul, South Korea, in their regular-season opener.

The 29-year-old Ohtani told reporters in Glendale, Arizona, that he is feeling good at the plate and seeing the ball well. The two-time AL MVP also said there is nothing new happening with his surgically repaired right elbow.

FAST FRIENDS

Yankees ace Gerrit Cole threw 36 pitches to Austin Wells over two innings in a simulated game, and then praised the young catcher's work behind the plate.

The 24-year-old Wells made his major league debut on Sept. 1 at Houston.

"He's come up and been like, I've never saw him bad," Cole said. "I thought that right away his game-calling was exceptional."

Wells hit .229 with four homers and 13 RBIs in 19 games last year. He could get significant playing time this season.

"It's great catching a Cy Young Award winner," Wells said. "Just trying to build a relationship with him. Started last year just picking his brain. Then come to this spring, the same thing, picking his brain and trying just to understand why he's throwing what pitches in certain counts."

Cole was pleased with his outing.

"I threw at least one good pitch of all different pitches and the velo was good," Cole said.

HE'S HERE

The Washington Nationals added some outfield depth by agreeing to a minor league contract with Jesse Winker.

The 30-year-old Winker appeared in 61 games with Milwaukee last year, batting .199 with a homer and 23 RBIs. He is a .264 hitter with 81 homers and 266 RBIs in 610 career games, also playing for Cincinnati and Seattle.

AILING

San Francisco Giants right-hander Keaton Winn is dealing with elbow soreness after throwing his last bullpen session. He will rest and receive treatment before being reevaluated this weekend.

Winn, who turned 26 on Tuesday, made his big league debut on June 13. He went 1-3 with a 4.68 ERA in nine games with San Francisco last year, including five starts.

Gleyber Torres enters final season ahead of free agency saying 'I want to be a Yankee for life'

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Starting what could be his final season with the New York Yankees, Gleyber Torres was clear about his intent.

"I don't want to leave," the 27-year-old infielder said Wednesday. "I want to be a Yankee for life."

Torres was an All-Star in his first two seasons with the Yankees in 2018 and '19, slumped badly for two years and rebounded to become a productive if not spectacular player. He hit .273 with 25 homers, 68 RBIs and 13 stolen bases last season with an .800 OPS.

Torres has a $14.2 million, one-year contract and is eligible for free agency after the World Series. There have not been any discussions about a long-term deal and he understands why the team might be reluctant following two notable players who underperformed: Luis Severino and Aaron Hicks.

Severino reached a deal in February 2019 that paid him $52.25 million for five seasons, then made just 40 starts and five relief appearances while going 13-12 with a 4.47 ERA. Hicks agreed that same month to a $70 million, seven-year contract for 2019-25, then had repeated injuries and hit .218 with 31 homers and 145 RBIs in 303 games before he was released last May.

"We know what's happened in the past, and I don't blame them. That's the business," Torres said. "So if I (have) a really good year and put (up) really good numbers, I think we can get a conversation, for sure."

Torres doesn't dwell on the uncertainty, busy with on-field work during the day and spending time with son Ethan, who turns 2 next month.

"I can't lie," Torres said. "I just think sometimes maybe that I'm starting my last year here because I don't know what's the business plan next year. But, man, it's just like motivate myself. Like I always say, we play for another team sometimes, and it's a business."

Torres knows this is a key year for the Yankees because of the number of players who can become free agents—he is joined by outfielders Juan Soto and Alex Verdugo, reliever Clay Holmes and right-hander Jonathan Loáisiga.

Yankees manager Aaron Boone called looming free agency a "pretty big carrot out there" for Torres.

"I think he's highly motivated," Boone said. "I think we saw a more mature approach last year that lends itself to more consistency at the plate. Now it's about putting it all together."

Torres doesn't want to negotiate during the season but hopes the Yankees will consider a long-term deal at some point. He cited Aaron Judge, who became a free agent after his record-setting 2022 season and agreed to a $360 million, nine-year deal.

Obtained in the 2016 trade with the Chicago Cubs for closer Aroldis Chapman, Torres has a .267 average with 123 homers, 378 RBIs and 49 steals.

He was among the players who arrived early Wednesday and were in their pinstriped home uniforms for photo day, a reminder of the Yankees tradition Torres wants to remain a part of. Torres has heard repeated talk of a possible departure but has gotten used to it.

"Every year is something, trade rumors and things like that," he said.

Devers lobbies Red Sox front office for roster help

By JAY COHEN
AP BASEBALL WRITER

Rafael Devers is looking for some help—from the front office of the Boston Red Sox.

With the Red Sox ramping up at the start of spring training, Devers made it clear Tuesday that he felt the franchise should have done more to improve the roster over the winter.

"They need to make an adjustment to help us players to be in a better position to win," he said through a translator. "Everybody in this organization wants to win. We, as (players), want to win. I think they need to make an adjustment to help us win.

"I'm not saying that the team is not OK right now, but they need to be conscious of what are the (weaknesses) and what we need."

Devers batted .271 with 33 homers and 100 RBIs in 153 games last year, but Boston finished last in the loaded AL East with a 78-84 record. The 27-year-old third baseman finalized a 10-year contract with the Red Sox in January 2023 that is worth $313.5 million.

The Red Sox were mostly quiet over the winter. They signed right-hander Lucas Giolito to a $38.5 million, two-year contract, and acquired outfielder Tyler O'Neill and infielder Vaughn Grissom in a pair of trades. But they also shipped outfielder Alex Verdugo to the New York Yankees, and parted with lefty Chris Sale in the deal with Atlanta that brought in Grissom.

Boston ranked sixth in the majors last year with a .258 team batting average, and its OPS of .748 was ninth. But it had a 4.52 team ERA, ranking 21st in the majors.

"Everybody knows what we need," Devers said. "You know what we need, and they know what we need. It's just there's some things that I can't say out loud. But everybody that knows the organization and knows the game knows what we need."

Coca-Cola, Foremost, Subway Platinum Sponsor of aipan Marathon 2024

Coca-Cola, Foremost, and Subway have collectively signed on as Platinum Sponsor of Saipan Marathon 2024 slated for March 9, 2024, in the Marianas.

The Marianas Visitors Authority has designated Powerade as the Official Sports Drink, Subway, the Official Sandwich Sponsor, and Foremost Quench, the Official Water of Saipan Marathon 2024.

Starting at race packet pickup on March 8 through the marathon awards banquet, participants will be able to enjoy a variety of products from the companies, including Powerade, Quench Water, Coca-Cola products, Foremost Blend Iced Coffee, Super Coffee, Super Energy, and more. Subway Restaurants of Saipan will provide sandwich platters to event volunteers. An assortment of gift certificates and other giveaways are also part of the sponsorship package from the group of companies.

"Our group of companies and the brands we represent are supporters of athletics at all levels. We are proud to work alongside the Marianas Visitors Authority and the Northern Marianas Athletics to bring this world-class event to the island," said Marcos W. Fong, CEO of Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc. and Foremost Foods.

MVA

Runners close the finish line at Saipan Marathon in The Marianas. Saipan Marathon 2024 will be held on March 9, 2024, in The Marianas with Platinum Sponsor Coca-Cola, Foremost, and Subway.

The Saipan Marathon is a certified measured course by World Athletics in cooperation with the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races. The marathon is co-organized by the MVA and Northern Marianas Athletics and is sanctioned under the Northern Marianas Athletics rules and regulations.

"We are so pleased to have Coca Cola, Powerade, Foremost and Subway onboard as Platinum Sponsor for Saipan Marathon 2024, helping us deliver an enjoyable race for all," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "The Saipan Marathon's association with some of the most recognized brands in the world is wonderful. Their generous support will provide a real treat for participants throughout their entire marathon experience from beginning to end, keeping them refreshed during what we aim to be a memorable race weekend in the Marianas."

Other race sponsors are Skechers as Exclusive Title Sponsor of the race; Gold Sponsors Bridge Capital, IT&E, and Triple J Saipan; Silver Sponsors United Airlines, Matson, The Athlete's Foot, Boarderline and All-Star Sporting Goods; Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands; Northern Marianas Athletics; and Bike Pro. In-kind sponsor is M&E Enterprises Inc. Saipan.

Over 400 runners have registered for either the full marathon, half-marathon, 10K or 5K, which will all begin and end at American Memorial Park in downtown Garapan. Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers and by age division in the marathon. Participants will receive a Limited Edition Official Saipan Marathon T-shirt, official Saipan Marathon medal, Certificate of Completion and one entry to the awards banquet on March 9 at Hyatt Regency Saipan. In-kind prizes will also be awarded for the Wacky Awards: Best Costume, Best Body Paint, Shortest Shorts, Most Awesome Shoes, Ugliest Shoes, and Craziest Hair.

Registration is open at www.raceroster.com and is $110 for the full marathon and $80 for the half marathon, 10K, and 5K. Full marathon participants must be age 18 or older. Half marathon participants must be age 14 or older. With valid photo ID, students ages 18 or younger may register for $60. Registration will close at 5pm ChST on March 7, 2024, and mandatory race packet pickup will be on March 8 from 4pm to 6pm at American Memorial Park Amphitheatre in Garapan, Saipan.

A new course highlighting iconic sites from 'The Marianas' rich history awaits full marathon runners. The road race will traverse sites from the various eras of Marianas history, including pre-history, the Spanish administration, the Japanese administration in the early 1900s, World War II, and modern history as a U.S. Commonwealth.

For more information, visit https://raceroster.com/events/2024/78587/saipan-marathon-2024 or www.mymarianas.com or contact MVA Community Projects Coordinator Ed Diaz at (670) 664-3210 or ediaz@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

MVA

Flame trees in blossom frame participants in Saipan Marathon 2022. Saipan Marathon 2024 will be held on March 9, 2024, in The Marianas.

SIMON

From page 28

No. 1 seed Wang, in her division, snagged the title against No. 2 Anne Lee in twin sets, 4-2, 4-2.

The weather was not on anyone's side that day as the Saipan International School student said, "The competition was very challenging due to the windy weather and shorter sets. However, I was able to win straight sets by being more aggressive and bringing the pace to myself.

She added, "Since I had already played the semifinals before my match, I was all warmed up to play my best in the finals."

The 15-year-old's goal is to win all the following tournaments in the girls' division and also play in the boys' division to challenge herself in the sport.

In the boys 12 division, No. 1 seed Jinho Cody Park took the finals crown after he bested No. 2 seed Michael Jeon, 4-2, 5-4. Eight-year-old Park said after their game, "I was kind of nervous and was kind of losing, but I won and I'm happy." As to how the match went, he said, "I was trying to give it to his backhand so that he can make it above the net and I can finish it."

In the girls 12 division, Scarlett Loken won both matches in their round-robin format to win the title. She challenged Selina Chi and won, 4-2, 4-1 in the finals.

In other results in the boys 14 division, No. 1 seed Ryan Choi swept all five games in their round-robin format. In the final game, he defeated Ian Chae, 5-3, 4-1.

No. 1 seed Stella Choi then swept the competition in the girls 14 division round-robin format. In the finals, she beat No. 2 Amy Park, 4-1, 4-1.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hoo Wang, right, won the girls 16 division singles. She poses with her white coconut trophy during the awards ceremony of the 2024 White Coconut Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park Courts

Another sweep was made in the boys 10 division, as Evan Zhang dominated all three games in the round-robin format. He won his last match against Jonghyun Lee, 6-3.2

In another round-robin format in the girls 10 division, No. 1 seed Fiona Yu also won all three matches and took the final match against No. 2 Aileen Kim, 6-1.

The 2024 Coconut Classic began last Feb. 9 to Feb. 11, then from Feb. 16 to last Monday and was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

LA

From page 28

than the shortcomings. There is obviously lots to work on when we return and this tournament will serve as a great source to draw on and build lessons around. One thing that can't be taught however is experience at these bigger events. We've only just begun to dip our toes into the world of high-level competition and we are here to stay."

Ramsey said the CNMI's maiden entry into the Junior Davis Cup would not have been possible without all the success that the CNMI has had in the past.

"All the thanks go out to all the players whose love for the game helped pave the way to these higher-level competitions. It can only serve to raise the level of tennis on our islands. It's an honor to be a part of the journey."

Last Monday, the CNMI made its much-anticipated debut in the Junior Davis Cup but got a rude welcome from Lebanon as they got swept, 3-0.

Playing against ranked junior players, Wessel was drubbed by world No. 1,901 Rami Saouli, 6-2, 6-0.

Lam did much better against world No. 1,205 Zahi Farhat but ultimately lost, 6-1, 6-3.

In the dead doubles match, Wessel and Yu dropped a 1-6, 1-6 game against Saouli and MD Georges El Mallah.

Ramsey said the CNMI being outclassed by third seed Lebanon shows how much a gap the Commonwealth needs to make up against the tennis powers in the Asia/Pacific region. "It was a tough day. I didn't know but those boys [from Lebanon] had junior world rankings. It really shows us how far behind we are in the early development stages of the kids," he said.

SANTOS

From page 28

Tan was named Female Athlete of the Month for February and November. She represented the CNMI at the World Athletics Cross Country Championship in Bathurst Australia in February, joining the 10K race and timing in at 44:41. In July, Tania reset her CNMI national record in the 3,000m after timing in at 10:18:81 at the BU David Hemery Valentine Invitational. She eclipsed her old mark of 10:57.58 set in 2022 in the Ramapo Season Opener indoor track meet in New York City. Later in the 2023 Pacific Games, Tan became the first NMI female athlete to have won two gold medals in the regional event after ruling the 5K and 10K races in Honiara. She also set a new Pacific Games record in the 5K after submitting 18:08.69.

Tan wasn't present at the banquet as she is in Hawaii for school. Her award was received by her mother Lydia Tan and father Jerry Tan, Northern Marianas Sports Association president.

In a social media interview, she said of her achievement, "I am extremely honored to have won the award. There are so many amazing and talented female athletes in the NMI so it's truly an honor."

She said her greatest sports achievement of 2023 was "definitely the Pacific Games in Honiara. Getting to play our CNMI anthem twice in the stadium in front of thousands of people by winning 2 gold medals was the most memorable."

Tan then dedicated her win to the whole CNMI community.

Her words of advice? Just like Santos, Tan's advice is "Never give up. Even when times get tough or it may seem like you aren't improving, just keep on training. I believe that consistency is the most important key to success so showing up day in and day out to practices will pay off in the long run."

The 2023 Male/Female Athlete of the Year nominees included Leo Apelo Jr. of weightlifting; Colin Ramsey of tennis; Joel Buco of cycling; Douglas Schmidt of basketball; Leowell Cristobal of weightlifting; Nokki Saralu of baseball; Joey Colisao of weightlifting; Antonette Labausa of weightlifting; Janelle Pangilinan of badminton; Erin Frink of athletics; Pipit Ball of va'a; and Christina Tudela of bodybuilding.

The banquet was attended by Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), NMSA president Tan and board members, representatives of CNMI's sports national federations, athletes, the awards banquet nominees, 2023 Pacific Games sponsors representatives, and athletes' family members.

Results of the 2023 Male/Female Student Athlete of the Year; 2023 CNMI Sports Hall of Fame inductees; Coach of the Year; Administrator of the Year; and Team of the Year will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

Hiro says Doha was a 'very good experience'

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

CNMI national swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura said despite mixed results in the 2024 World Aquatics Championship, overall, Isaiah Aleksenko and Maria Batallones' stint in Doha, Qatar was still worthwhile.

"I feel that this World Aquatics Championship was a very good experience. It was a meet that brought a lot of reflection and challenges not only for the swimmers but also for the coach."

He did admit that mistakes were made, especially in Aleksenko's disqualification in the 200m individual medley, but reiterated that the shortcomings were his.

"I made a mistake as to whether the race was long course or short course, and I was unable to do enough preparation for the swimmers. If we have an official pool, the practice we do there can be applied to either LC or SC races, but since it is an irregularly sized pool, we can't practice for either. If you practice in that kind of pool, both will collapse. Anyway, the coach was not thoughtful enough this time. I also regret that I broke our daily routine the day before Isaiah's race. We should have done it thoroughly every day."

AP

From left, Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation representative Richard Sikkel, CNMI national swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko and Maria Batallones, and CNMI national coach Hiroyuki Kimura.

Kimura said the 2024 World Aquatics Championship, like the nature of all competitions, is always about "meeting the answers."

"The competition is not an exam. The exam is daily practice. If you do all the wrong subjects in your daily exam, you won't get many correct answers when you check your answers. As with any sport, practice is everything."

While Aleksenko's performances in the aforementioned 200m IM and the 200m butterfly have already been documented, Batallones actually swam one more event, the 200m breaststroke, after her 100m breaststroke CNMI national record mark.

In her final event, the 15-year-old Marianas High School student swam a 2:54.73, which didn't eclipse her own CNMI national record of 2:53.85.

"Maria was in Heat 1, but normally she would race with swimmers of the same level, but there were two swimmers who entered in Heat 1 with no entry time, and unluckily both of them were very fast swimmers. One is Belarus' national champion, Alina Zmushka, and the other is Speedo Junior National Championships swimmer, Stephanie Iannaccone. It is very difficult to swim between swimmers with a large difference in level and body size. Maria had to swim against big waves and swells from both sides. Despite being in such a difficult heat, Maria still swam within a second of the record, which is admirable," said Kimura.

Had Batallones been in a heat that was a little easier to swim in, Kimura is sure she could have set a national record.

"However, no matter what I say, it will only serve as an excuse, so we will continue practicing with the determination to start over from scratch."

Next up for the CNMI's national swimming team is the Japan Junior Olympics in March. Only swimmers who made the qualifying time can participate in this meet and for the CNMI only Aleksenko has qualified and he will swim the 50m and 100m butterfly.

"No CNMI swimmer has qualified for this meet in the past. No other 17-18 CNMI record holder has made the qualifying time in this event, so just participating is already an accomplishment. Our target is to advance to the finals and to be on the podium. If we can make it to the podium, it will be a historic achievement."

After the Japan meet is the Oceania Championships, which will be held in Gold Coast, Australia in April. Although swimmer selection has not yet been completed, Kimura said the Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation has decided to send several swimmers.

Then the biggest event of the year will happen in June with the 2024 Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands. Kimura said NMISF will be sending 12 swimmers in the regional event.

"Almost all of Pacific Games' swimming medalists and finalists will be participating, so we hope to win medals comparable to the 2010 Palau Games," he said.

Old Aces school Triple L, 97-47

Old Aces schooled Triple L/Tax Pro, 97-47, in the continuation of the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball League and last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Triple L was left in the dust quickly and had to scramble for the lead from the get-go. They tried to pace with the Old Aces in the majority of the first quarter, but was halted by the Old Aces' much more potent defense.

The second quarter proved to be the turning point, with Triple L seizing the opportunity to close the gap. From a 22-13 first quarter in favor of Old Aces, Triple L's offense came alive in the second, sinking fast-break plays back-to-back baskets by Fradel Sedillo to get within one point, 32-31.

However, Old Aces' Tony Diaz came bearing down the court with a force that outmatched Triple L and managed to pull them away into a 10-point, 41-31, distance by the end of the first half.

The third quarter saw the start of the inevitable fall of Triple L as Old Aces' smooth shooters Diaz and Romeo Iginoef let bucket after bucket swish the net without much retaliation from a collapsed Triple L defense. Diaz completed 26 points, while Iginoef scored 13.

Only 16 points were scored by Triple L in the third quarter, and at the end of it, Old Aces doubled their lead to a 20-point 67-47 deficit.

Darkness then blanketed Triple L's offense in the last quarter as they could not get their shots in and ended the quarter without a single point. Despite an impressive second-quarter surge, Triple L ultimately succumbed to a devastating fourth-quarter collapse, resulting in a blowout loss by a staggering 50-point margin.

Old Aces' Chris George's 11 points and Dan Joab and Peter Camacho's 10 markers each assisted Diaz and Iginoef with their first win of the season. Sedillo was all alone in double-digit territory with 12 points, while Rommel Usi scored 9, and Sonny Lerio put up 6.

Old Aces 97 – Diaz 26, Iginoef 13, George 11, Joab 10, Camacho 10, Tudela 9, Mendiola 7, Libuw 6, Guerrero 5.

Triple L/Tax Pro 47 – Sedillo 12, Usi 9, Lerio 6, Embile 5, Pineda 5, #8 4, Pagcaliwagan 2, De Belen 2, Valio 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-13, 41-31, 67-47, 97-47.

LEIGH GASES

Old Aces' Tony Diaz goes for a layup while being guarded by Triple L/Tax Pro defenders during their game in the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

LEIGH GASES

A Triple L/Tax Pro player goes for a jumper during their game against Old Aces in the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Ferrer fast and furious in Mini II Class

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

T.J. Ferrer started the season on the right foot by winning Mini II Class of the 2024 "MOTO IV" Points Race Series last Sunday race at the Cowtown Race Park.

The 13-year-old Tanapag Middle School student won both heats aboard his 2021 Yamaha YZ85 for a perfect 50 points. Calix Cruz was the only other rider in the division and finished with 44 points.

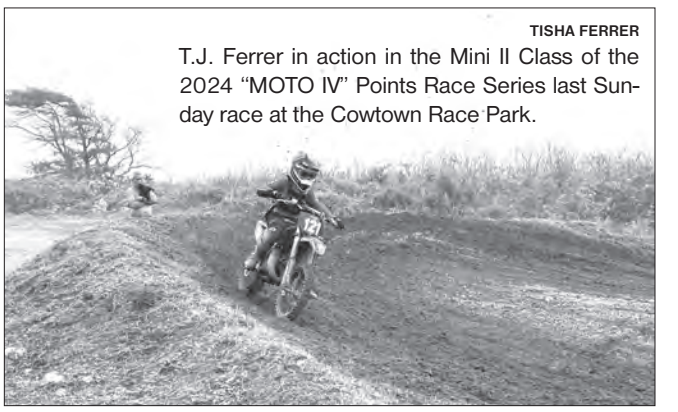
"It feels really good especially for the first race of the season. The course was really muddy and the weather was rainy and most of the time cold," said Ferrer.

He then dedicated the win to his father, mother, sister, and all of his supporters and friends at the track.

In the Big Boy ATV Class, Henry Camacho Sr. also took both races for 50 points, while defending champion Christian "Hollywood" Camacho finished second with 44 points.

In the Women's Class, Guam's Mariana Wenden beat all comers for both heats for a perfect 50 points. Billie Pangelinan finished second with 44 points, while Mari Alvarez came in third with 40 points.

The organizing Marianas Racing Association also came out with the 10-race 2024 calendar with the competitions set on March 17, April 28, May 19, June 30, July 7, July 28, Aug. 11, and Aug. 15.



TISHA FERRER

T.J. Ferrer in action in the Mini II Class of the 2024 "MOTO IV" Points Race Series last Sunday race at the Cowtown Race Park.

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The stretch run of the NBA season has arrived.

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Sports

Hiro says Doha was a 'very good experience'.

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Santos, Tan are Athletes of the Year

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The CNMI's sports world in 2023 saw many momentous achievements of athletes across various disciplines, culminating in a celebration and recognition of those achievements at the 2023 NMSA Sports Award Banquet last Wednesday night at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

The night's most anticipated award—the 2023 Male/Female Athlete of the Year boasted a formidable lineup of nominees—with Ray Santos of weightlifting awarded the 2023 Male Athlete of the Year, and Tania Tan of athletics honored with the 2023 Female Athlete of the Year award.

Each nominees' 2023 achievements—from record-breaking performances and podium finishes resulting from their hours of training, hard work, sacrifice, and discipline—were showcased in a video for all in attendance to witness.

Santos was the Male Athlete of the Month for November. He won the first gold medal for Team NMI in the 2023 Pacific Games. He topped the snatch category in the men's 55-kg class in the weightlifting competition. His third lift of 96 kg gave him the gold in the snatch category and he later added a bronze (112 kg in clean & jerk) and silver (208 kg total weight lift) after completing his events. He went on to bag four medals in Honiara, as he was also awarded the silver medal in 2023 Oceania Championships, which was held simultaneously with the 2023 Pacific Games.

Santos, being only one of two nominees present (with baseball's Nokki Saralu), was surprised that he was named the 2023 Male Athlete of the Year. "I wasn't expecting to win athlete of the year. I just went to support and of course the buffet," he said.

With that, he feels "blessed to have been nominated and chosen to be athlete of the year. I would like to dedicate this to everyone who supported me near or far."

He then thanked God, his family, friends, and his sponsors Lone Fox Bistro & Lounge and Health City Guam.

His advice for aspiring athletes is to "never give up even if times are tough."

See SANTOS on Page 25

LEIGH GASES

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang presents the 2023 NMSA Male Athlete of the Year trophy to weightlifting's Raymond Santos, center. They are joined by Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan for a group photo during the 2023 NMSA Sports Award Banquet last Wednesday night at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

LEIGH GASES

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang presented the 2023 NMSA Female Athlete of the Year trophy to Tania Tan's parents, Jerry Tan and Lydia Tan during the 2023 NMSA Sports Award Banquet last Wednesday night at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

La Hunn salvages singles win vs. Turkmenistan

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

The CNMI did a better job against fellow unranked Turkmenistan in Group C of the Junior Davis Cup after La Hunn Lam won his singles match and Nason Wessel and June Yu dragged their doubles match into a tiebreak last Tuesday at the Sri Lanka Tennis Association in Colombo.

Wessel, the CNMI's No. 2, was again the first to play and after being blanked in the opening set made a game of it against Selim Chagylov before ultimately losing, 0-6, 4-6, in 1 hour and 15 minutes.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI national coach Colin Ramsey, right, poses with players Nason Wessel and June Yu before their match Junior Davis Cup match against Turkmenistan last Tuesday in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Lam, the CNMI's No. 1, fortunately equalized the tie when he beat Imran Ahundov, 6-4, 7-6, in a protracted match that lasted a little over 2 hours.

Wessel and Yu then gave it the old college try in the doubles before yielding the tiebreaker, 0-6, 6-3, 10-4, in an hour and 11 minutes.

CNMI national coach Colin Ramsey said the tie against Turkmenistan could've gone either way as evidenced by the 2-1 result, but the breaks didn't go their way.

"Tough, tough loss the other day that could have sent us into the playoff for ninth-16th place. Instead, we're fighting for 17th-24th since we finished third in our pool of three. La Hunn had a great triumph in his singles match that took every ounce of his energy," he said.

Overall, he believes the team is adjusting very quickly to the clay surface and discovering more about their individual game styles and trying new tactics that eventually will win them a greater percentage of points.

"We've had lots of little triumphs during the past few days that are being emphasized rather

See LA on Page 25

Simon, Hoo claim boys/girls 16 division title

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Simon Tang topped the boys 16 division, while Hoo Wang dominated the girls 16 division in the 2024 White-Coconut Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts last Monday.

No. 2 seed Tang knocked out No. 1 seed Si Woo in the shortened sets, 5-3, 4-2. The tourney's Sunday games were rained out, so they had to cut each of the matches short with no deuces on Monday.

This is Tang's second title in as many tournaments—the other being the recently held 2024 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament last month.

Sixteen-year-old Tang said of his win, "I feel very happy that I managed to win another title! The weather wasn't in favor for Siwoo or me. It was really hard to take control of our service games due to the wind."

He said his strategy then was to stay calm but aggressive at the same time. "I knew that I wouldn't be able to control any external limitations. Due to the rain we had to play short sets which was a bummer but even with those conditions we definitely had a very competitive and fun match!" said the Saipan Southern High School junior.

See SIMON on Page 25

LEIGH GASES

In the boys 12 division singles finals, No. 1 seed Jinho Cody Park smacks a return against Michael Jeon in the 2024 White Coconut Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park Courts.